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The Huguenots of La Rochelle

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THE HUGUENOTS

OF

LA ROCHELLE.

" There was woman's fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love's truth;
There was manhood's brow, serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth."

THE

HUGUENOTS

OF

LA ROCHELLE.

A TRANSLATION

OF

"THE REFORMED CHURCH OF LA ROCHELLE.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH,

BY LOUIS DELMAS,

PASTOR, AND PRESIDENT OF CONSISTORY."

1870.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY GEORGE L. CATLIN,

UNITED STATES COMMERCIAL AGENT AT LA ROCHELLE.



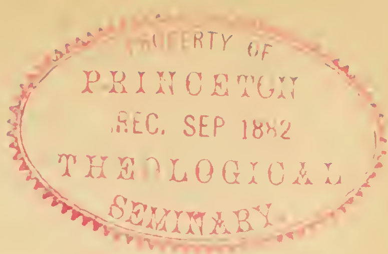
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PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE wide reputation of the venerable author of this work as a thinker, a scholar, and a theologian, together with a knowledge of the rare opportunity he has had, during his half-century of faithful service as Protestant Pastor at La Rochelle, for collating and weighing facts bearing upon the subject herein treated of, has induced me to believe that a translation of his work into English would prove a valuable contribution to the standard literature of our language relating to the history of the heroic French Huguenots; and I have been more especially led to hope that it would prove of interest to American readers, for the reason that from those of that gallant race who sought a refuge upon our own shores have since sprung many who have reflected renown upon the country of their ancestors' adoption.

A valued personal acquaintance with M. Delmas justifies me in adding a warm tribute to the fairness of his judgment, the broadness of his views, and the sincerity and earnestness of his convictions. His days have been

devoted to doing good, and now, in a ripe old age, he is enjoying the happy rewards of a well-spent life, beloved and respected by all who know him, and, among them, by the translator of this work.

G. L. C.

LA ROCHELLE, Jan. 26, 1880.

INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR.

THE researches made by the Reverend Pastor Philip Vincent in relation to "The Origin and Early Progress of the Reformation in the City of La Rochelle," published at Rotterdam in 1693, being out of print, it had occurred to me to edit them from the manuscript in the archives of the Consistory, the handwriting of which resembles that of Pierre Mervault, author of the "Diary of the Siege of 1628." But my attention has been called to the fact that this document, coming from the pen of a judicious and moderate author, after the style of the Oratorian Jaillot, stops at the year 1571, and that therefore it would be preferable to publish a complete history of the Reformed Church of La Rochelle from its origin up to the present time. No such work really exists, unless it be in fragments, scattered through the works of divers authors, and presenting gaps more or less considerable. It has consequently occurred to me to fill up these gaps by bringing together these scattered fragments, and thus forming a consecutive and homogeneous history, using for this purpose the papers left the Church of La Rochelle by Dr. Bouhereau, — papers which have lain unused for two centuries in one of the public libraries of Dublin, and which were recovered in 1862 by the Council of Presbyters. Undertaken primarily with a view to mental occupation, this work was not intended for publication. But I subsequently decided to

publish it, in accordance with a desire expressed by several persons to see recapitulated and compiled in a comparatively small compass the principal facts relative to the glorious past of our Church; so that even those readers little versed in such matters could familiarize themselves with its annals without the need of tedious research. The history of the Church of La Rochelle being intimately connected with the general history of Protestantism, it may be that our co-religionists in other parts of France will find some interest in its perusal. Perhaps, too, those who are indifferent to religious subjects, who enjoy the fruits of liberty of conscience without troubling themselves to inquire what generous blood it was that watered the tree from which they gather them, may experience a renewed ardor by being thus reminded of the sufferings of our fathers, and be aroused to an inquiring interest in the Evangelical doctrine, through a recollection of the sacrifices which had to be made in order to transmit to us the good faith.

In publishing this work, it is not necessary for me to caution the reader that I intend to offer no civil or political history of the city the name of which is found on the title-page, while, at the same time, I shall not entirely exclude topics of that nature. The political borders so closely, in fact, upon the religious in the annals of our country, — the one, I mean, has been so frequently either mingled or confounded with the other, in the annals of our city, — that it is impossible to completely separate the two. But we must limit our treatise to the religious portion of La Rochelle's history, and confine ourselves to that phase of it which is at once the most lofty and the most calm. If we are led to allude to the perishable interests of earth, we must not forget that they are subordinate to the eternal interests of the soul, and that it is with a view to the latter that we take up the pen.

It is with no desire to excite passion or rekindle hatred that we proceed to recount the trials of the kingdom of God in the celebrated city which was the last stronghold of French Protestantism. We write in no spirit of party, or interest of sect, but

in a spirit of peace and Christian liberty. Our desire is to glorify God, and render homage to the truth: we intend to acknowledge the errors of our friends, without failing to be just to our opponents. We may be mistaken in some of our opinions, but we disclaim in advance any error or injustice which may have been overlooked by our impartiality. Even in the severe condemnations we may feel compelled to express, we shall aim to speak the truth in all charity. If we chance to transgress this rule, it will be involuntarily, and by reason only of that frailty which is inherent in humanity, — *Errare humanum est.*

I owe much of this work to my worthy friend, M. Louis de Richemond, who has been kind enough to place at my disposal his own researches on this subject, from which I have frequently borrowed, and to obtain for me material facts I have needed, all of which he has done with a zeal and cordiality for which I cannot sufficiently thank him. The assistance he has lent me amounts to that of a co-laborer, in fact; and I should have been glad to place his name side by side with my own on the title-page of this work, were it not that it would be unfair for him to share with me the responsibility of the condemnations which I have felt compelled to utter against certain persons and things.

In some paragraphs I have had recourse to manuscript notes furnished by the kindness of Mr. L. Delayant, the City Librarian.

I could have wished to revise this work, and render more complete certain parts of it before giving them to the printer. But I have arrived at an age when a man's strength begins to fail him, and I do not feel that I possess the requisite energy to put the task again before me. Accordingly, if any one is struck with its imperfections or its lackings, I shall neither be surprised nor offended, as I do not conceal from myself the defects of my work.

For nearly half a century it has been my privilege to serve as pastor at La Rochelle; and it is sweet to me, as I near the end of my career, to bequeath these pious remembrances to a Church

I have so dearly loved, and for which I feel my affection redoubled as the moment for my separation from it approaches. I place this work, then, under the blessing of our Heavenly Father, and under the auspices of those among whom I have so long been an ambassador of Christ. May it strengthen them in their faith, and render them immovable in the profession of their hope.

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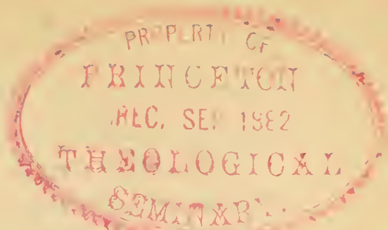
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THE

HUGUENOTS OF LA ROCHELLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN AND EARLY MANIFESTATIONS OF PROTESTANTISM AT LA ROCHELLE, IN THE MIDST OF PERSECUTIONS.

1512–1559.

The Reform at Meaux. — Lefèvre and Briçonnet. — Early Persecutions. — Calvin at Poitiers. — The Reform at La Rochelle. — Early Martyrs. — Foundation of the Church. — Its Early Progress. — First National Synod of the Reformed Church of France. — The Confession of Faith and Discipline.

THE origin of the Reformed Christian Church of La Rochelle has no precise date. One cannot designate the day or the hour of its birth. No powerful individuality either gave it its name or stamped upon it its character. It attaches itself to no special event as the point of departure of this religious episode. It sprang, during the first half of the sixteenth century, from the weariness, disgust, and indignation aroused in men's souls by the abuses of every kind which had crept into the religion of Christ, as well as from the aspirations of consciences despoiled of their rights, and from a desire for disenthralment from the superstitions and errors which had surrounded the Church, and a longing

for a return to the enlightened teachings of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

Some have sought to attribute it to a contact with the Dutch navigators, who, attracted to La Rochelle by their commercial interests, might have roused the attention of its inhabitants to the great questions then under agitation in Germany; others, to the attachment of the Rochelais to their municipal franchises, — an attachment which may have inclined them to a religious system favorable to their republican tendencies. These two surmises are, to say the least, very questionable; for France had gone even further than the countries of the North in religious reform, and experience has shown that Protestantism is allied to no special form of government. It adapts itself to the monarchy as well as to the republic.

But granting that there be some truth in this double supposition, it does not suffice to explain the movement which took place in this city; and we must look higher to find a clew to the events which succeeded each other within our walls. No doubt, the mighty voice which Luther had caused to be heard throughout the North of Europe had been re-echoed on our shores, and Reform had found an auxiliary in the spirit of liberty prevailing among the people of La Rochelle. But it must not be forgotten, that the movement in question was not confined to one city; it spread abroad to a multitude of places, and under diverse circumstances. That such a profound emotion should have been awakened among the people, it must have been that their souls had received the preparation of the Spirit, — of that Spirit which "bloweth where it listeth," as the Saviour said to

Nicodemus. Thus it was that there existed at that time in our city, as in all Europe, secret aspirations and mysterious longings; thus it was that the souls of men were eager for justice and truth; thus it was that the single word "Gospel" made the very heart bound; and it was only necessary to pronounce this transcendent name to elicit numberless expressions of sympathy. As in the days that preceded the advent of the Son of man, people awaited the consolation of Israel. One would have said it was an echo from the invisible world, repeating across the lapse of fifteen centuries the joyful and solemn accents the celestial messengers had sounded upon the plains of Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

But, before realizing these sublime aspirations, the reform of the Christian Church was destined to encounter violent opposition. Diverse interests, unchained passions, struggles, and terrible rendings asunder were coming to arrest and hamper this work, undertaken in the name of the cause of God and conscience. In our city was this especially destined to be the case.

I.

That Providence which had enkindled in men's souls an ardent desire for light and holiness could not leave that desire unheeded. And to satisfy it, the translation of the Holy Writings into common parlance furnished the occasion. Without that, — that is to say, without any means of recourse to the Scriptures given by God, — mankind would simply have been driven to destruction; after powerless efforts, and fruitless endeavor, they would have relapsed into slumber and

darkness. But against this the Lord had provided. Beginning with the year 1521, in fact, Lefèvre d'Etaples published in French the four Gospels, a publication soon followed by that of the other books of the New Testament, then by that of the Psalms, and the remainder of the Old Testament. So that, in 1528, seven years after the translation of the four Gospels, the entire Bible was printed in our language, and ran through several editions. A little later, in 1534,[1] the complete Bible, translated by Olivétan, was circulated throughout our county under the auspices of the Vaudois of Piedmont, who had recognized the French Reformers as brothers, and hastened thus to nourish these newly-born churches with the pure and spiritual milk of the Word.[2]

It was a brilliant beacon-light that thus suddenly shone forth in the midst of the night prevailing over the earth; a beacon eminently calculated to dispel the darkness rising unceasingly from the depths of the abyss. The Sacred Books, hitherto shut up in the convents, or the libraries of the learned, were now finally to be brought forth from their hiding-place to pass into the

[1] "The Bible, that is to say, all the Holy Scriptures in which are comprised the Old Testament and the New, translated into French; the Old from the Hebrew, the New from the Greek." 1535. Neufchatel: Pierre de Wingle, surnamed Pirot Picard.

[2] The translation of the Psalms of David, by Clement Marot, was presented to Charles Quint during his passage to Paris (January, 1540), dedicated to Francis I., and published in 1543 with a Preface by Calvin addressed "To all Christians and lovers of the Word of God." Theodore de Bèze continued the work of Marot in 1553, and the Psalter was completed in 1560. The music is due to Louis Bourgeois, Claude the younger, William Franc, and Claude Goudimel. In 1542, the Pope authorized, at Rome even, the printing of the Psalter of Marot by Theodore Brust. The Sorbonne, which had at first condemned this publication, sanctioned it in 1561.

hands of the faithful, and their sovereign authority, universally admitted, was shortly to bring about a thorough revolution among the Lord's inheritance. It consequently was of importance for those who imparted, as well as for those who followed up, the movement toward Reform, that they should make no innovations, nor rush into venturesome theories, but should return to the doctrine of the inspired. It was of importance, not to revolt against legitimate authority, but to shun despotism and usurpation. It was of importance that they should combat that spirit of revolt against Divine authority which had seized upon the leaders of Christianity, and that they should lead mankind to obedience to the Gospel.

II.

Besides this powerful means of instruction, divers works calculated to second the movement then in progress in the minds of men, and coming from the pens of eminent men of the epoch, had been publicly circulated. Thus it was that in 1512, five years before Luther had put up his famous theses on the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral, Lefèvre had had his Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul printed, and had openly professed the docrines of the freedom of salvation, and of justification by faith.[1] Thus it was that in 1535 John Calvin, a student in the University of Orleans, issued "The

[1] It is generally believed that Lefèvre professed to the Sorbonne the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, but this is an error. Lefèvre was not one of the doctors of the Sorbonne. He was Professor of Philosophy in the college of Cardinal Lemoine, where he had Farel for a colleague. Moreover, it matters little whether it was at the Sorbonne or elsewhere that he taught wholesome truth.

Christian Institution," a work which attracted the attention of the world of science to the questions then under debate, and contributed powerfully to the success of the Reform. These were valuable auxiliaries, which operated effectively upon the souls of mankind, and prepared the way for the regeneration of the Church.

Convinced of the truth of the doctrine that the Reformers endeavored to bring to light, and struck by their keeping with the Holy Scriptures, one of the prelates of the French Church, Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, had joined in this good work, and called into his diocese some wise and godly men, such as William Farel, Martial Mazurier, Michel d'Arande, Gerard Roussel, John Lecomte, and Lefèvre himself, whom he made his Grand Vicar. Encouraged by this marked approval, these pious doctors began to teach in private assemblies, and then in public pulpits. But the Sorbonne, jealous of its privileges, was not slow in being aroused at such simple explanations of the Gospel, and sought to suppress these efforts at reform in the diocese of Meaux. At first, Briçonnet resisted the means employed to combat the new doctrines. But soon, shocked by the attacks levelled against his Grand Vicar, and in order to turn aside the peril which even menaced himself, he sacrificed his reform projects to a desire to retain his position. In order to re-establish his reputation for orthodoxy, now so seriously compromised, he even went so far as to show himself hostile to those whom he had honored with his sympathy, forgetting this solemn declaration made during the days of his fervor: "Should I ever change my faith again, beware of changing as I do"; — while Jean Leclerc, a simple workman in his

diocese, remained firm in the faith, and, to bear witness to it, endured torture the bare recital of which causes a shudder. What a humiliating and instructive contrast! The Bishop of Meaux, under the influence of fear, hastens to repudiate the teachings that make him incur a risk of losing his honors and his revenues, while a poor wool-comber, sustained by courage from above, upholds them with holy fortitude, not hesitating to give his life for that which the other has sacrificed to the interests and glory of the world. "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first," saith the Gospel.

This torture of Jean Leclerc opens, to a certain extent, the era of persecutions, or rather that long list of martyrdoms which the intolerance of the Middle Ages adds to that of the primitive Church. The martyrdom of Jacques Pavannes and of Louis de Berquin, burned alive at Paris, the first in 1525, the second in 1529, shows with what rigor the Roman Church meant to proceed against those convicted or suspected of heresy. But the blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the Church, and, spite of these violent measures, the Reformation was daily spreading in the provinces.

III.

Before proceeding farther, let us make, in regard to the spirit animating the Roman Church, a statement calculated to throw light upon facts which we are to treat of in this recital; namely, that that Church is essentially intolerant. Not that all its members are animated by a spirit of persecution; there are some — we are pleased to acknowledge the fact, and we thank God for

it — who have sentiments of sympathy and charity, and who disavow the excesses into which others have allowed themselves to be led. But we must not confound individual Catholics with Catholicism. If the former, listening to the voice of humanity and justice, repudiate the maxims which characterize its policy, the latter — I mean Catholicism, or rather the system framed to defend its interests — implies persecution. The Roman Church has persecuted, she will persecute, all who separate from her, and whenever she has the means to do so; that is, whenever she can have the material force at her disposal. It is the fatal consequence of the maxim, "No safety outside the Church," and of the *Compelle intrare* which she believes she has the right to apply to heretics. That constitutes in her eyes a wholesome severity. Her pretensions, however, do not stand the test of trial; they are contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Gospel; but she is sincere in her error. She believes she is rendering service to God, who would willingly dispense with such service, and to heretics, who would still more willingly dispense with it. But the premises being granted, the conclusion naturally follows.

We must not be surprised, then, if we see this Church arraying herself against any manifestation of conscience; if we find her always hostile to Reform, always ready to arrest its progress by means of the stake and the sword. Acting thus, she was in her proper element, and could not abandon it without self-contradiction. She will renounce it only when she shall herself have been reformed; that is, when she shall have repudiated oppression and violence, and submitted to those principles of

support and custom which are the essence of Christianity.

Moreover, we make this reflection without harshness or bitterness, reckoning that it pertains entirely to an indictment and defence of that Church; to the indictment of her theory, anti-human and anti-divine; to the defence of her intentions, which are sometimes worth more than her principles, since, while flattering herself as being charitable, she even lacks the charity to lead back souls into her pale. An inflexible logic holds her fast; her spirit leads her heart astray, and drives her to deeds revolting to religious as well as humane sentiments, deeds of which she is in the end ashamed, when she has regained her calmer moments, and has to render account to public opinion. Indeed, when public indignation is aroused against certain acts of violence, such as the Vaudois massacre, St. Bartholomew, or the Dragonnades, the Church seeks to decline responsibility for them; she lays them at the door of the civil authority; she pretends that the latter could not avoid taking these steps for its own safety, and that the Church, which has a horror of bloodshed, is not responsible for them. But no one is deceived by these tactics.

IV.

Beside persecuting those who adhered to the doctrines of the Reformation, the Catholic doctors did not fail to combat them by their writings. Among them is a work which appeared in 1528, under the title of *Merveilleuse Histoire de l'Esprit de Lyon*, a Catholic apology for Purgatory, addressed to the Lutherans, already numerous in France, and dedicated to Francis I., who,

after having caused a discussion of the subject to be held in his presence, had shown himself hardly satisfied. The same year, the Archbishop of Sens complained in a provincial council "that there were some who were holding secret assemblies, and busied themselves to read and preach among those of their sect," and he invokes the secular arm against them.[1]

If such events were transpiring in Lyons and the archbishopric of Sens, they must have also taken place in other parts of France. But the severity practised towards those who professed the suspected doctrines prevented them from presenting themselves in the open light of day, and therefore their history is in many cases but little known. That La Rochelle early counted some adherents of what were called "the new doctrines," is evident from the martyrdom of a poor girl of Essarts, in Poitou, who was burned alive in the year 1534, "with such fortitude," says the account, "that she was admired for it." Now, this courageous girl, named Marie Belandelle, or Gaborite, had served at La Rochelle, probably in a house where the Gospel was known. On her return to Essarts, she feared not to attack the doctrine of a Franciscan friar, and confused him by the passages of Scripture she had retained in her memory. Ashamed of his defeat, the monk concealed his resentment, and induced her to repeat in public what she had said to him in private. Accused forthwith of heresy, she was put in prison, tried at Fontenay, and sentenced to be burned alive. A decree from the Parliament of Paris confirmed this horrible sentence, which was executed at Essarts.

[1] *Sanctiones Ecclesiasticæ in Concilio Senonenso.*

The preachings of Calvin in Angoumois and Poitou, and those of Jean Vernon, who continued his work when the Reformer had been compelled to withdraw to Bâle; the labors of Philippe Véron, called "the Gatherer," who, according to Florimond de Rémond and Victor Cayet, had for his field of labor Angoumois, Saintonge, and Aunis; those of Philibert Hamelin, the Reformer of Saintonge, — all these had been made public in La Rochelle, and aroused men's minds to an inquiry into wholesome truth.

It is certain that at this epoch there were in the city people concerned about the Reformation, and who had embraced its faith, since the humble servant of whom we have just spoken had been there able to acquire a conviction deep enough to suffer her to be burned alive sooner than deny her belief.

In spite of the severity of the edicts during the sojourn of Francis I. at La Rochelle in 1542, some secretly professed the doctrine of Luther.[2] Arcère informs us, even, that on the 22d of May, 1544, Francis I. wrote from St. Germain-en-Laye to the Count of Lude, his Lieutenant in Poitou, who had replaced Jarnac as Governor: "I have been warned that in La Rochelle and its environs there are several persons greatly tainted and infected with these accursed and damned Lutheran errors, who have joined themselves together, and in flocks, and who go through the country causing infinite scandal, and sowing among the

[1] There is still shown in the environs of Poitiers a cave known under the name of "Calvin's Cave," where the Reformer celebrated the Holy Sacrament with his friends, being unable, on account of the violence of persecution, to do so publicly.

[2] Jaillot, *Mes Annales*, II. 13.

people their unfortunate and damned doctrine, a thing which displeases me. For this cause, I write to the Lieutenant of Poitou that he actively and secretly inform himself as to who the aforesaid are, and that against those whom he shall find charged therewith he shall proceed, arrest them, chastise, and punish them so strictly and severely that it may be an example and terror to all others."

The doctrine which the King so harshly qualifies made such rapid progress, that it gained adherents even among the professors, the ecclesiastics, and the nuns.

A little later in fact, in 1546, the Master of Schools in the city was observed to be leaning toward Protestantism, and teaching his pupils the principles of the pure Gospel. For this reason he was, during the following year, excommunicated. Soon afterward, the nuns of the St. Claire Convent, called "Black Sisters," fell away from their faith, and broke the yoke no longer sacred to them, in order to enter into the ties of marriage or to return to their families. The Procurer of the Ecclesiastical Court of the Bishop of Saintes, having presented himself at a monastery and demanded explanation, the abbess and nuns who were there replied to him that they were only answerable to the Pope and the priest of the Franciscans.

Affrighted by these symptoms, the clergy increased its precautions to arrest their progress. But soon Protestantism gained members even from among the clergy themselves. An Augustine monk, named Goymoult, was accused of heresy, and confined in the episcopal prison of La Rochelle, whence he succeeded in escaping on the 15th of July, 1547. The following year,

Troublier, the Procurer of the St. Augustine convent of St. Yon, at La Rochelle, was accused of false and erroneous doctrines of heresy at St. Martin-de-Ré. The 8th of August of the same year, the Seneschal's office seized some Protestants, and compelled them to make public retraction, "with naked feet, *en chemise*, and a taper in their hands," before the principal door of Notre Dame de Cougnes. Others, upon the information of the priest Soulier, were banished and flogged until they bled, at the same time being prohibited from making use in future "of any heretical language, under penalty of being burned alive." Finally, on the 17th of May, 1550, Jean Denybat, Vicar-General of the Bishop of Saintes at La Rochelle, called together all the curés, vicars, and monks of his jurisdiction, to warn them "against every dissenting and scandalous schism." [1]

It was a useless precaution. The Reformation gradually spread, and gained ground among the literary classes. "Some libraries in this city offered and exposed for sale books condemned and prohibited by the King, our Sire, as contained in the catalogue of condemned books, for instance the Colloquies of Erasmus; and the school regents and masters of this city read them publicly in their school." A list drawn up in 1548, by an inquisitor of the faith, informs us what these pernicious works were. By the side of the Reformer Wickliffe, John Huss, Jerome of Prague, Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin, are found the Commandments of God, the Life of Jesus, the Psalms of David, and all the Bibles which contain in the Epistle to the Romans the words, *Fides justificat*

[1] Registers of the Ecclesiastical Court and of the Government of La Rochelle.

non opera, — "We are justified by faith, not by works." On the 12th of July, 1550, the Ecclesiastical Court absolutely interdicted the reading of these works in the public schools, and the Protestants of La Rochelle began to hold schools secretly at their houses, where religious teachers instructed their children according to the Gospel.[1]

V.

From this period until 1552, the annals of the time furnish no other traces of the advance of Protestantism in our city. The work of God was latently operating in men's souls. The perils and punishments to which those professing the new doctrines were exposed constrained or paralyzed their manifestation. But in this year 1552, says Philippe Vincent, a judgment was rendered, and a notable execution carried out, against three men of the religion, the wording of which I have discovered, and considered worthy of insertion here in its entirety.

Here is the sentence word for word: —

"On the part of the King's attorney, plaintiff in the crime of heresy, errors, false doctrine, and dogmatisms against the

[1] The attorney of the Ecclesiastical Court, on the 30th of July, 1550, denounced before that court several schoolmasters for holding secret schools: Pierre Delagarde, who lodged at the house of François Barrier; Helyes, at the house of Pierre Main, on the Grande Rue; Nicolas, at the house of Jacques David; François Seneschal, at the house of Nazaret; and two Gascons, at the houses of Ferbouillant and Morisson. Suspected of instructing their followers "in a separate and unwonted doctrine, as well as of not observing the ancient form in regard to the teaching of good morals, and the wording of prayers and orisons," they were summoned to appear "in order that they might be heard and examined on the doctrine that they were administering to their followers, and otherwise be proceeded against as might be just and right."

honor of God and the Holy Virgin and the Christian religion, and the customs of our Mother the Holy Church, transgression of the edicts and ordinances of the King, the crime of disturbing public tranquillity, — against Matthias Couraud, called Gaston des Champs, Pierre Constantin, called Castin, and Pierre Lucas Mongaud, confined in the prison of this court.

"Considering the charges and informations made against the aforesaid, respectively, the criminal indictment by us made against them, the conclusions of the King's attorney, the whole considered, the name of God first invoked, and, upon this, the advice of counsel; and after having caused the said prisoners to appear, and to be amply interrogated, and the said Couraud having persisted and persevered in the greater part of the heretical, schismatic, erroneous, scandalous, and very blasphemous propositions with which he is charged by this indictment, and the said Constantin and Mongaud not having wished to persevere in them; we have declared the said Couraud and Constantin attainted and convicted of the circumstances above named, and of being seditious men and schismatics, and disturbers of our Christian religion and of the public peace, having often spoken and advanced assertions in public, and having discussed them in opposition to the Holy Sacrament of Penitence and Confession, and against the honor of the sacred Virgin Mary and of the saints, male and female, against the authority and dignity of our Holy Church and its ministry; and moreover, the said Couraud of having practised dogmatism and given readings to the towns-people, and persevered in the said errors; and the said Lucas Mongaud of having, oftentimes and in public, spoken disdainfully and irreverently of the Very Holy Virgin Mary and of the Saints, male and female, and against the ecclesiastical constitutions and the solemnizations of the fêtes ordained by our Mother the Holy Church, and against the free arbiter: and in so doing to have thus troubled the repose and tranquillity of the faithful with whom they conversed.

"As reparation for said outrages resulting from said criminal indictments, proceeding to definite judgments, 'as the last

resort,' according to the Edict given to Chateaubriand[1] on the 27th of July, 1551, signed by the King (Du Tillet) and published at court the first day of September following, we have the said Matthias Couraud, Pierre Constantin, and Lucas Mongaud condemned and do condemn to make honorable amend, *en chemise*, head and feet bare, a cord about their necks, holding each of them a torch of burning wax of one pound weight, and the said Mongaud a fagot of wood on his back, all this upon a scaffold which for this purpose shall be erected before the great and principal door of Notre Dame of Cougnes; and to the said scaffold the said Couraud and Constantin shall be led and drawn upon a hurdle, with a cord about their necks and a fagot upon their backs, upon which said scaffold they shall remain upon their knees for and during a high mass which shall be said and celebrated in the said church; the which said, the said Couraud and associates shall demand by word of mouth, in a loud voice, pardon of God and the Very Sacred Virgin Mary and the saints, male and female, and the King and Justice, for the erroneous, heretical, and schismatic propositions and for the blasphemies by them uttered and advanced, respectively, against the honor of God, the Holy Sacraments, the honor of the Sacred Virgin, and against the constitutions of the Church, confessing by this means that they have troubled the public repose of the faithful; exhorting our reverend brother in God, the Bishop of Saintes, to summon a general procession of the parish churches of this city to assist at the said mass, and at its close to deliver a preaching and a sermon according to the

[1] In order to well understand this part of the judgment, one must call to mind that in 1551 King Henry II., having made an alliance with the German princes and the Confession of Augsburg, sent to protest against the Council of Trent, and forbid the carrying of any silver to Rome. But for fear of being suspected of favoring those of the religion, he published the "Edict of Chateaubriand," by which he renewed those edicts which had already been rendered against them; and in order to prevent the prolonging of legal procedures by appeals, he vested in the Presidials the power of taking cognizance of and passing sentence upon them "as the last resort." It was in virtue of this edict that the three Rochelais were condemned and executed.

demands of the occasion; and after the said public retraction we have condemned the said Couraud to have his tongue slit in such a way that he can no more talk; and this done, to be all three reconducted in the condition and order above stated (except that they shall no longer hold the said tapers) to the prisons of the City Hall; and two hours afterward, in the said condition, to be led into the open square of the City Hall, in the which we have condemned and do condemn the said Couraud to be burned alive in a great fire which shall be built and made in the said place; and the said Constantin to be strangled, and while being so to be placed in another fire in the said place; and the said Mongaud to be present at the two executions, still *en chemise*, feet and head bare, a cord about his neck, a fagot upon his back, upon another scaffold which to this end shall be built in the said place; and the said executions over, to be flogged with switches by the executioner of high justice around the two fires until his blood flows; and this done we have banished and do banish him in perpetuity from this city and this government; we have inhibited and forbidden, and do inhibit and forbid him from ever again making use of scandalous, erroneous, heretical, and schismatic remarks; thus we have enjoined and do enjoin him to live in conformity with the prevailing opinion of our Mother, the Holy Church, without in any way derogating therefrom, under penalty of being burned alive. The aforesaid are condemned to the expenses and costs according to the tax which shall by us be therefor made, which shall be the first paid out of their property; and the rest of the property of said Couraud and Constantin is declared forfeited and confiscated to the King; and moreover we have condemned and do condemn the said Mongaud to two hundred pounds amend to the King, and to remain in prison until full payment thereof. We enjoin and command, upon the part of the King, all classes of persons, of whatever quality and condition, to come forward to denounce and disclose the names of all those of either sex whom they may know to be unfavorably disposed toward our faith, and who make profession of scandalous, heretical, or schismatic doctrines; this under penalty of being

declared their abettors and receivers, and, like them, punished according to the severity of the royal edicts and ordinances.

"Made and given by us, Claude d'Angliers, Esquire, King's Counsellor and Lieutenant-General at La Rochelle, on Tuesday, the 10th day of May, 1552.

"Signed, D'Angliers, Amateur Blandin, Michel de Cherbois, Vermaud, Achard, Perpaud, Boucher, Chanvier, Brichet, and Gauvaing.

"Signed herewith,

"LEROUX, *Registrar Clerk.*

"Pronounced in the Government Court of La Rochelle in presence of the advocates and the attorney of the King. The said criminals sent for by reason hereof, by us the said D'Angliers, the said day and year; and the same day, by these presents signed, duly executed.

"Signed,

"LEROUX, *Registrar Clerk.*"

Here was a formidable sentence, which must have fairly staggered even the partisans of wholesome severity. Imprisonment, fine, confiscation, perpetual banishment, flagellation to the point of bloodshed, enforced retraction, strangulation, the tongue slit, torture by fire, all are here lavishly bestowed, with a refinement worthy of the most barbarous ages. And the absurd element seems at times to rival the odious, for one can with difficulty understand how it could have been possible to force a man to retract who obstinately refused to say anything. If the retraction imposed had alleviated the fate of the condemned man, one can conceive that the hope of obtaining the benefit of it might have made him speak against his conscience. But after having abjured his pretended errors, the unfortunate man had to have

his tongue slit and be burned alive, — so that he gained nothing by asserting the falsehood exacted from him, and it is doubtful whether this portion of the sentence could have been carried out, notwithstanding the assertion of the Registrar Clerk, who adds, "The same day, by these presents signed, duly executed." It was not possible to execute it, save with the consent of the sufferer, who was unable to give that consent.

Such, then, are the indignities or the cruelties that were inflicted, not upon rogues or malefactors, but upon pious and worthy citizens; for the sentence cites no act of theft or murder, not even a single minor delinquency, on the part of the accused. It only mentions scandalous, heretical, and schismatic remarks and blasphemies against religion and the saints, and against the constitutions of the Church. But these blasphemies did not consist in impious words against religion, or against the Divinity, not even against the Virgin Mary or against the saints. These alleged blasphemers professed that it was a duty to serve the living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: they honored the Virgin Mary as the blessed Mother of the Saviour, and they honored the faithful who have given an example of Christian virtues. Their blasphemy was confined to the assertion that it is necessary neither to adore nor to invoke the Virgin and the saints, because such religious worship rendered to creatures simply constitutes an act of idolatry, reproved by the Gospel. They had spoken against the fêtes, auricular confession, the free arbiter, and the authority which the ministers of the Roman Church arrogated to themselves, or against the practices contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. It is this that their crime amounted

to. I find the proof of it in the silence of the sentence, which would not have failed to contain a mention of the fact had they been guilty of any other offence, and also in this, that it is stated they had "dogmatized." But even had their error been as real as it was imaginary, it had been accompanied by no evil act, and there was no reason for condemning them to have the tongue slit, to be strangled, and to be burned alive.

Is it said, that by the laws of the Middle Ages heresy was a crime punishable by death, and that there was inflicted upon these unfortunates only the chastisement they had knowingly incurred? But even from this stand-point the sentence in question is defective, for heresy belongs to the spiritual domain; it ought to be proved by the religious, and not by the civil authority. Now in this instance the Church had not intervened to declare that the accused were heretics. Nothing indicates it in the sentence that we have reproduced. It is only the magistrates who affirm the charge of heresy, and who put themselves in the place of the spiritual judges, whose declaration should have preceded the capital sentence. Why did not the Church, always jealous of her rights, lift up her voice against this encroachment by the civil power? I know that the Edict of Chateaubriand gave the judges of Presidials the right of taking cognizance of the crime of heresy when it occasioned public scandal and transgressions of the laws. But then why did the Church permit herself to be despoiled of her prerogative without a protest? Why did she not claim the authority that pertained to her, in questions of this nature? Why did she suffer, without saying a word, this substitution of the Presidial for the

Ecclesiastical? Was it because she found it convenient to let her work be done by the justice of the land, to the end that she might appear immaculate in the eyes of the world, and maintain her pretensions to a horror of bloodshed?

What a strange spectacle in a city! to spurn, to mutilate, to torture, virtuous and worthy citizens because they did not conform to the common opinion of the Church! The habits and precedents of the time could not justify these acts of ferocity committed under pretext of the honor of a just and charitable Deity. Such indignities would rather dishonor the living God, were He not above dishonor by man. The Church that was associated with this horrible execution should, were she not an accomplice in it, have remembered that Christ came, not to destroy men, but to save them, and to use his sway to arrest the arm ready to strike the innocent.

But the wicked's work always leads him astray, and this torture, intended to terrorize adherents of the new doctrines, or to repress their manifestation, produced a contrary effect. The ashes of those who had been delivered to the flames proved the seed of the great people which, a few years later, arrayed itself under the standard of the Reformation. What a wonderful thing, and how worthy the contemplation of the enemies of truth! Several of the judges who had signed this pitiless sentence embraced the faith of those whom they had sent to torture, and labored bravely to befriend its progress. "This is what, among others the Lieut.-General Claude d'Angliers did," says Philippe Vincent, "as I have before me writings of his which prove it. So that it is credible that the reasonings which they

might themselves have deduced, and the constancy, above all, of him whom neither the fear of torture nor the terrible dread of flames could move from his firmness, touched them deeply, and produced upon their minds a strong impression, the effect of which made itself in time apparent." The memory of these unhappy victims of intolerance and fanaticism worked upon their minds, not as an avenging shadow rearing itself before them to punish them for their cruelty, but as an affecting picture, or rather an irresistible force drawing them towards the doctrine which those victims had confessed. Thus, in this horrible drama, to the judges and executioners there came defeat, while to the victims and martyrs came triumph; so that, with the early heralds of the Christian faith, they could exclaim, "We are conquerors, though we perish."

VI.

Moreover, the method of intimidation employed was no more successful in arresting the movement of men's minds toward the Reformation in the environs of La Rochelle, than it was within her walls; for in 1551 some Evangelical churches were established at the Isle of Arvert, St. Jean-d'Angely, Poitiers, and Châtellerault; and in 1556 at Saintes, at Marennes, and at the Îles Neuves. As for La Rochelle there were as yet there but some few elements lacking cohesion, scarcely conscious each of the other, having neither temple nor pastor, and reduced to the necessity of concealing their beliefs. These were the hewn stones for the edifice, but not yet the edifice itself. These were the members of the Church, but not yet the Church itself. However, in 1557, Pastor Charles

de Clermont, says Lafontaine, having come to La Rochelle, assumed the direction of the religious movement, and, with the assistance of Jean de la Place, succeeded in assembling the persons who had thrown open their hearts to the persecuted doctrine. "It was in this year," says an old chronicler, "that the truth of the Gospel began to be exercised in the right."

In the following year, 1558, Theodore de Bèze informs us that Pierre Richer, surnamed De Lisle, on his return from a voyage to America,[1] succeeded to Charles de Clermont, and organized the little Rochelais flock, to which he gave a consistory and a discipline; so that it is he who may be considered the father of the church of La Rochelle. This fact is confirmed by the registers of the consistory, where Richer is the first who, in the capacity of pastor, signs the baptisms and marriages; previous to that time they only bore the signature of the elders.

But while the members of the little flock were incurring the greatest dangers in failing to conform to the common opinion of the Holy Mother Church, suddenly the king of Navarre, Antoine of Bourbon, and Jeanne d'Albret, his wife, arrived at La Rochelle, and raised the courage of the partisans of the new doctrines. Received with the greatest honors by the magistrates of the city, inasmuch as Antoine of Bourbon was Governor of Guienne, and La Rochelle upheld his government, they

[1] This voyage of Richer's is connected with the expedition of Villegagnon, undertaken under the auspices of Coligny, and having for its object the propagation of the Gospel. But Villegagnon, having soon changed his behavior and declared that he no longer adhered to what he called the Calvinist Sect, forbade any preaching. After having endeavored to secretly hold religious assemblies, Richer, who had followed this expedition, returned to Europe with several of the faithful, and, after having escaped the greatest perils, finished by reaching La Rochelle.

remained thirteen days in the city. Initiated into Christian truth by Margaret of France, also queen of Navarre, sister of Francis I., who, although she had not outwardly broken off with the Roman communion, had yet taken the Reformation under her protection, Jeanne d'Albret endeavored to inculcate in her husband the Gospel principles she had learned from her mother. Under their blessed influence, they had in 1555 caused the Gospel to be publicly preached in the great hall of the château of Nérac by Pierre David, whom the Bishop of Agen had excommunicated under the pretext that in his sermons he taught suspicious doctrines.

Having accompanied the king and queen of Navarre in their journey to La Rochelle, Pierre David, by their authority and aided by Le Bois-Normand, preached to the people for the first time that they should read the Holy Scripture, and make it the rule of their faith. These preachings took place in the church of St. Bartholomew, and one of the first fruits was the conversion of the Demoiselle Dufâ, Lady of La Leigne, who after her departure from La Rochelle suffered all kinds of severities in the prisons of Paris, on account of her religious convictions.

VII.

The sojourn of the king of Navarre at La Rochelle was also signalized by the representation of a religious allegory, which contributed in no small degree to discrediting the Roman ceremonies, and which Philippe Vincent reports in all its details, "having himself been informed of it by an elderly lady named Catherine de Launay, maternal aunt of M. Jean Grenon, lawyer and

King's Attorney in Admiralty of this city, and great-aunt of Pastor Elie Bouhereau, one who retained her mind clear and her memory strong up to the very moment when she gave up her soul to God."

"During the sojourn of this prince here," says he, "there came a band of comedians who put up their theatre, to which repaired, as usual, a great crowd of people.[1] One day, when the prince, and also the queen, his wife, were present, having given notice that they had a play of importance, so that there was an extraordinary attendance, they represented a woman who, sick to the last degree, gave utterance to great sighs, and asked that some one should give her relief. Then the curé of the parish was called for, and he presented himself with all his equipage, sparing no means in his power to afford her some relief; but it proved impossible for him to do so. After him followed all the other ecclesiastics, one by one, who succeeded no better. In addition to the ordinary ones, they summoned various orders of monks, who endeavored to afford her some remedy; nor were there wanting relics, nor indulgence-bags well loaded, which were read off to her one after the other, nor even the ceremony of clothing her completely in a coat of St. Francis. But, for all that, the poor patient found herself not a whit relieved, and said, lamentingly, that none of them all knew anything about how to confess her. As she was at this point, there approached one of her acquaintance, who came to give her notice, as it were in private, and looking around here and there to see if there was anybody who heard him, that he knew a man who would confess her to perfection, and would put her altogether in the right way; but that this man, being so constituted that the air of the day-time was hurtful and unhealthy for him, would go abroad willingly only after the sun had set. She then begged that this man might be brought to her. After some little period of waiting, and making believe that night had come, he was led to her presence. She beheld a plain man, dressed like any one

[1] This custom prevails in La Rochelle to this day, 1880. — G. L. C.

else, who, after holding at her bedside some conversation which the attendants could not hear, but from which, it was evident by her gestures, she experienced great satisfaction, drew from his pocket a little book, which he presented to her, telling her that it contained unfailing recipes for her sickness; so that, if she would try them, without doubt she would, in a few days, find herself restored to her former health. The man having retired, and the patient, with her bed, having been carried off the stage, after some little interlude, the latter suddenly appeared again, no longer ill or in bed, but well and entirely cured, and, after having made several turns up and down the stage, remarked to the assistants that she was obliged to acknowledge that this stranger had succeeded admirably in confessing her, a task which none of the others had been able to accomplish, and that, furthermore, the recipes contained in the little book which he had given her were absolutely unequalled, as could be seen in the prompt effect they had had upon her. So, if there were any of those present who were afflicted with the same malady as she had been, she advised them to have recourse to her little book, and for this purpose she would willingly lend it; however, she would warn them beforehand of a twofold inconvenience she had found in it; the one, that in touching it to her hand it was a little warm, and the other, that to the smell it had the unpleasant odor of a fagot. Further than this, should any one inquire her name, or that of the book which she had been praising so warmly to them, those were two enigmas which she left to them to guess.

"All this having been acted with great charm, the prince, and the queen, his wife, as well as their court, gave evidence of having been much pleased, and so, following their example, did a great number of those present, several of whom already experienced some disgust for the Roman Church, and understood that this patient represented Truth. The first ones, who had not confessed her well, represented those who took the titles of Pastor and Doctor, and who, instead of confessing Truth, detained her unjustly; the last arrival was one of those pretended heretics whom the severity of the times compelled to hide him-

self, and who alone knew and confessed her, as his duty required. The book which was warm, and smelt of the fagot, was the New Testament, which people were forbidden to have or read at home under penalty of fire."[1]

But, alas! what was pleasing to some people's tastes was not agreeable to others; the ecclesiastics, above all, were very far from taking it in good part; they complained bitterly of it to the magistrates, so that the actors were obliged to quit the city. Had it not been known that the prince and his wife had taken them under their protection, they would have had a hard time of it, and the comedy might have lapsed into a tragedy. But nothing came of it; only, for some days, nothing else was talked of, and several were led to inquire about this book which contained such excellent precepts.

Philippe Vincent, who relates this anecdote, takes care to add that he does not approve of such a play. "Religion is too serious a matter," he says, "to be made a play of, too holy to be dragged into the theatres, too hostile to the world to beg for assistance from its ministers." We are of his opinion. But it must not be forgotten that at this epoch men were holding Truth uujustly captive, and it was necessary to use a great variety of means to bring it to light. Had the Church proclaimed the great doctrine, that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for every one that believeth, there would have been no necessity for resorting to this stratagem to secure its liberation. But when the pulpit was silent, the stage felt it had a right to speak. "If

[1] The Bulletin of the Society of the History of Protestantism (1860, p. 28) expresses the opinion that this mystery might be the *Moralité de la Maladie de Chrêtienté*, printed by Pierre de Wingle in 1533.

these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out," said the Saviour.

In any case, it was not for those who had authorized *Mystères*,[1] and resorted, but a short time before, to this same artifice, in order to cast disgrace upon Margaret of Navarre, — it was not for those now to feel scandalized by this innocent allegory.

It is known, in fact, that the doctors of the Sorbonne, being obliged to retract the censure uttered against the *Miroir de l'Âme pécheresse*, "Mirror of the Sinful Soul," published by this illustrious princess, took revenge by playing, at the College of Navarre, a tragedy in which they represented her under the form of a Fury, issuing from hell, and scattering about her the pestilential poisons that she had brought thence with her, — and the matter went so far that the King, becoming angry, put several of them in prison. The scene performed at La Rochelle was not a reprisal made by Jeanne d'Albret against the enemies of her mother; but what right had those who had rudely insulted, upon the stage, persons whom they could not disgrace by their censures, to be severe toward those who made use of the same method, without casting aside the rules of decency?

[1] In the Middle Ages they gave the name of *Mystères* to theatrical pieces of which the subject was taken from the Bible, and in which God, the angels, devils, etc. were made to appear. Extolled by the clergy, these pieces were played first in the cathedrals, then in the *parvises*, and finally in public places. The greater part of them were composed by clerks, and played by them, or by brotherhoods and companies. It was a glory and an honor to play in the *Mystères*. This union of religion and buffoonery was rigorously proscribed in 1545, the period at which low comedy had its birth; but they still gave the name of *Mystères* to all theatrical representations, because they had commenced with representations of the mysteries of our religion.

VIII.

But God's ways are not our ways, and by these various means the little flock which had gathered in our city received an increase so considerable, that those composing it resolved to establish a discipline, with a view to maintaining order and sound doctrine among its members. Consequently, on Sunday, the 17th of November, 1558, there were chosen eight persons to form a Consistory, which, independently of the pastor, who was then a M. Faget, was composed of four elders, two deacons, a scribe, or secretary, and a receiver, or treasurer. But this number soon proved inadequate, and on the 24th of December they added four elders to those already appointed, a clear proof that the church was gaining in number and importance.

The functions of the members of the Consistory were at once honorable and useful. They consisted in choosing the place where the faithful should assemble in secret; in receiving alms, and distributing them to the needy; in reconciling estranged persons, and reprimanding those who had fallen into any fault, according to the constant custom of the early Church. The ecclesiastical discipline which constituted the glory of our forefathers had not, as yet, been sanctioned by the Synods; but it found its germ in the customs of the Protestants of La Rochelle.

The fires at the stake being kindled on all sides, and several persons having already lost their lives for the sake of religion, the faithful only assembled by night, and in houses with several means of egress. The owner kept watch without, to warn those present in case the

assemblage should happen to be discovered. One had to be well known, and inspire perfect confidence, to obtain admission to these nocturnal meetings. It was even decided, that for the present, and until circumstances should be less critical, women should not be allowed to take part. This measure had to be taken in order to prevent evil suspicions, considering the hour at which the meetings were necessarily held, — perhaps, too, in order not to expose the church to new storms, through the indiscretion of those whose husbands were not yet won over to the faith. This appears from the registers of the Consistory, which were kept with such caution that the proceedings which were there reported bore no name whatever. The elders were therein designated by a conventional letter, for fear of exposing them to some danger should their signature chance to fall into the hands of their enemies.

What an unfortunate period, when fanaticism was stifling the purest sentiments of human nature! when to interest one's self in religion outside of the formal worship and traditions of the Roman Church sufficed to draw down upon one the hatred of his fellow-citizens, and to discover, even among the members of his own family, those who would denounce him! But what a glorious time, when the interests of salvation and eternity possessed supreme importance, and when there were those who feared not to face persecution and death, in order to study these sublime questions by the light of the Gospel torch!

However, the situation was very serious. In most of the provinces, those who connected themselves in any way whatever with the doctrines of the Reformation

were being cast into the flames, and the church of La Rochelle lost, at this period, one of its most fervent members, Pierre Arondeau, a travelling dealer in dry goods, who was arrested on suspicion of Protestantism, and transferred to Paris, where he was burned alive on the Place de la Grève, on the 15th of November, 1559. But this execution had no other effect than to strengthen the members of the church, and exalt the zeal of the martyr's co-religionists.

In this same year, 1559, they commenced to keep an accurate registry of the baptisms, one of the first of which was that of Pierre Bouhereau, ancestor of the Pastor Elie Bouhereau, a pious and distinguished man, who carried on his ministry at La Rochelle with great edification from 1640 to 1653.

But the severities practised against the Protestants were not relaxed; and it was on this account that those of La Rochelle and its vicinity, persuaded that the King only authorized the bad treatment they had to endure by reason of his "not understanding truly what their doctrine was," resolved to make known publicly their principles in a profession of faith, declaring "that they were ready to sign with their blood this profession, taken from the word of God, and to die all together, rather than to be drawn into law separately, and made to die, one by one, under false and calumnious imputations."

Having perfected this plan, they sent the ministers of La Rochelle, St. Jean d'Angely, Saintes, and Marennes to the king of Navarre to communicate it to him, and confer with him. But Antoine of Bourbon was too cautious to encourage this project; he invited the Rochelais

"to keep still, and in all patience let this storm pass over, waiting for God to look to it."

Hence this wish of the Protestants of Aunis and Saintonge was not carried out immediately ; but it was soon practically realized by the confession of faith proclaimed a short time afterwards in the Synod of Paris, on the 25th of May, 1559, in spite of the enormous difficulties which the undertaking presented. Gibbets were forthwith erected on the public places ; bloody laws bore hard upon the Reformers ; and Anne Dubourg, counsellor at the Court of Paris, had just suffered martyrdom for having censured the edicts against the Protestants. It was under these circumstances that the first Synod of the Reformed Churches of France assembled in the capital of the kingdom. The historian De Thou says, that the calling of this Synod "was one of the bold strokes of which possibly there had been no parallel in religion." The pastors of St. Jean d'Angely and Marennes were delegated to express there the wishes of the Rochelais ; and it was doubtless in recognition of such expression that the assembly sent to La Rochelle the ministers Brulé and Nicolas Folion, surnamed De Lavallée, "who carried with them the articles of formulary of the discipline proclaimed by said Synod."

The delegates to the assembly at Paris hastened to return to their churches, consoling some, strengthening others, so that there was a daily increase, several magistrates holding secret sympathy with the Reformation, and abstaining from a persecution of the Reformers with that severity which the King's letters to the Parliaments and to the judges of the kingdom prescribed.

In accordance with the resolutions adopted by the assembly of Paris, all the churches of France found themselves thereafter united in one body, under the same confession of faith and the same discipline. We shall recur to this monument of the fidelity and wisdom of our forefathers when the chronological order of narration shall call us to speak of the sanction which it obtained in our city, at the Synod held in 1571. For the moment let us confine ourselves to remarking, with one of the best authorities on this subject, "that the creed of 1559 opposed to the reproaches of Catholicism its dogmatical articles, all founded on the Scriptures; to the suspicions of royalty, a proclamation of its submission to the laws, and of obedience to civil authority." The Huguenots thus affirmed that they wished to be Christians in reality, as well as in name, and that they laid the foundation of their church in the essential beliefs which in all ages have constituted positive Christianity, and which distinguish it from mere systems of philosophy.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROGRESS AND VARIOUS PHASES OF THE REFORMATION AT LA ROCHELLE.—ITS DEFINITE ESTABLISHMENT SANCTIONED BY ROYAL POWER.

1559–1573.

Numerous Adhesions of notable People to the Reformation. — Regular Establishment of Public Exercise of Reformed Worship. — Singular Toleration between the two Communions. — The Pastor Jean de l'Espine. — Mournful Consequences of the Massacre of Vassy. — Violent Outbreak of Civil Wars. — Palissy seeks a Refuge at La Rochelle. — Pastor Odet de Nort. — Condé, Coligny, and Jeanne d'Albret at La Rochelle. — The National Synod. — St. Bartholomew's. — Liberty of Conscience gained by the Rochelais after their Courageous Defence in the Siege of 1573.

THE occurrences just described constitute what may be called the origin of Protestantism in our city, "the day of small beginnings" spoken of by the prophet. They were sad and laborious times. The Reformation could not escape this law of our nature. It received the baptism of blood on its entry into the world, and that constitutes one of the glories of its destiny. In the period about to follow, its condition was improved, although it was not entirely freed from fear and fetters. We find it growing great in our city, and drawing toward itself the rich and the poor, until it had won over the mass of the population, and had been authorized by royal power.

I.

Henry II. having died on the 10th of July, 1559, Francis II., his son, succeeded him on the throne of France. Young and of feeble character, he was not slow to fall under the control of the Guises. Influenced by their fatal power, he practised toward his Reformed subjects the same severities which had marked the preceding reigns. Though the first magistrates of La Rochelle had been won over to the new ideas, public worship was still held secretly, and the registers of the Consistory were signed in figures. But the calamitous reign of Francis II. was not of long duration; and on the accession of Charles IX., his brother, the Protestants began to find some repose. In the year 1561, this prince sent letters which, suspending the prosecutions against the Reformers, favored a development of their doctrines. The comparative security thus enjoyed allowed those of La Rochelle to assemble and to keep the Consistory registers with more freedom. The pastors, Richer and Faget, were enabled to exercise their ministry without being disturbed or prosecuted. Richer and Nicolas Folion, surnamed De Lavallée, who had arrived at La Rochelle in 1559, and who had been obliged to use caution, now no longer feared to show themselves in public; they attracted to the Gospel faith a goodly number of inhabitants, even from among the principal people. The Mayor, Jean Salbert, showed himself favorably disposed to the religionists, and the members of the city government opened their own houses to religious meetings. Conversions were multiplied to such a degree that the number of members of the Consistory had

to be increased to twenty-seven in order to suffice for the management of the flock.

Among these conversions one of the most remarkable was that of the Chevalier Guy Chabot, Lord of Jarnac, Governor and King's Lieutenant to the army, and Seneschal of Justice for the government of La Rochelle. Mention is made also of that of Jean Pierres, Lieutenant-General, and others, under whose authority services were openly held in the city. From that time public exercise of the Reformed religion, temporarily tolerated by Antoine of Bourbon, was authorized and regularly celebrated.

In this year, 1561, was held the famous Colloquy of Poissy, toward the expenses of which all the churches of France were called upon to contribute. That of La Rochelle taxed itself thirty pounds for this purpose.

II.

The private dwellings no longer sufficing to accommodate those who repaired to the religious assemblies, meetings were held in St. Michael's Hall, the out-building of a Laymen's Association suppressed by Charles IX., and hence become public property; also in the premises called Gargouillaud, or Gargoulleau,[1] from the name of its owner. But soon even these capacious halls were found inadequate. The Consistory, having specially assembled on the 11th of October, with the concurrence of the principal members of the church, demanded and obtained from the Mayor (Salbert) authority to hold ser-

[1] This property is now occupied by the City Library and Museum. The street on which it fronts preserves the ancient name, "Gargoulleau." — G. L. C.

vices the second day afterward, at noon, in the Church of St. Sauveur. The attendance was so large that it is reported a woman came near being suffocated.

To obviate such inconveniences an effort was made to provide a more spacious place of worship, viz. St. Bartholomew's Church, which was procured in the same manner, that is, without annoying or preventing the exercise of the Roman religion. The priest continued to hold service there, only, by an understanding between the two sets of worshippers, when the one went out, the other entered. This spirit of tolerance imparted itself from La Rochelle to all Saintonge "with a great peace," says Philippe Vincent, "and without any evil-speaking or mistrust between them." For a time, the feeling of harmony was carried to such an extent that, on the 25th of October, 1561, the Consistory asked the priests of St. Sauveur to begin their mass a little before daylight, which request was granted, and in return the Protestants paid for the candles and lights to be used in the Catholic services.

Thus, notwithstanding the opposition of their creeds, the Catholics and the Reformers of La Rochelle treated each other as friends and brothers, giving the world a touching example of mutual tolerance, and the same building serving them alternately as a place for prayer. Were not these broad and kindly acts more pleasing to Him who is Charity, than the narrow-mindedness and hostility which the former of the two, at a later period, displayed toward the latter, fancying themselves soiled by contact with those who did not share their opinions, or submit to their religious practices, and chasing them as pestiferous persons from their cem-

eteries and churches? Thus, at this period, did the population of La Rochelle furnish a most instructive and most praiseworthy example of toleration.

But this state of things, at once so joyful and so gentle, did not last long. On the 21st of November, 1561, there was published an edict from the King, which took away from the Protestants the churches subject to the *Simultaneum*. Distressing as this edict was for the Reformers, it did not disturb the prevailing concord. They yielded without a murmur, contenting themselves with a formal acknowledgment from the Roman ecclesiastics, in presence of the Lieutenant-General, "that, during all the time they had held services there, no violence had been done." Furthermore, according to Philippe Vincent, "the Sieurs de St. Sauveur and de Launay were deputed to wait upon M. de Burie, the King's Lieutenant in the province, to render count to him of the prompt and full obedience which had been given to the King's will."

One fact is worthy of remark: it is, that, by the force of principle, when brought into the presence of and before the progress of the Reformation, the convents were deserted. The monks and devotees of the order of the "Four Beggars," who were in La Rochelle, and the nuns of the "White Sisters" (of the order of Prémontré) and "Black Sisters" (of Sainte Claire), relinquished and abandoned their convents.[1] Doubtless, as the historian remarks, the hatred or ridicule which was attached to their persons may have influenced those monks or nuns who abandoned the monasteries. But the Gospel light which shone resplendent in the city,

[1] Amos Barbot, II. 82, quoted by Arcère.

did it not exert its power upon their minds as well? Had it not its good part in this movement, and did it not lead many of them to avail themselves of Christian liberty?

Until this period the priests of the Roman Church were alone admitted to bear the succor of religion to those condemned to death; but as ideas of justice and tolerance began to see the light, it came to be understood that it was not fair to refuse Protestants, who had incurred the supreme penalty, the ministrations of their religion, in order to prepare them to die. Thus the pastors of the Reformed Church were thereafter called in for unfortunates who were under sentence of capital punishment. Brulé and De Lavallée made them chant on such occasions the fifty-first Psalm, in the form of a prayer, and Amos Barbot relates that one of the criminals, it may be in order to prolong his life, it may be from some other motive, got the name of M. de Lavallée wrong, and cried out, in a loud voice, "M. Lamontagne, one more song," which was granted him.[1]

III.

By reason of the edict of the 21st of November, which interdicted the use of churches by turns, religious exercises were resumed in the St. Michael and Gargouillaud Halls. But this measure did not arrest the tendency of men's minds toward the Reformation, and before the end of the year the number of proselytes had so increased that the pastors were no longer equal to the needs of the flock. To remedy this deficiency, it was decided to send to Geneva one Guillemet, Lord of

[1] Jaillot, *Mes Annales*, II. 63.

Chaulmes, one of the elders, with a view to procuring some other minister. Unfortunately, such were rare at Geneva as well as elsewhere, and Calvin, overwhelmed with calls of this nature, was obliged to make this well-known response to those who addressed him: "Send us wood, and we will send you arrows."[1]

After two months' absence, Guillemet returned without bringing the desired person. An effort was then made to discover near home that which could not be found afar off, and attention was turned to one D'Espina or De l'Espine, pastor at Fontenay-le-Comte, whose eminent services commended him to the Consistory's choice. The conversion of this new minister to Protestantism had occurred under circumstances so remarkable that it is proper here to give an account of them as transmitted to us by Philippe Vincent, who had it from his maternal grandmother, a native of Château-Gontier, in Anjou, where Jean Rabec[2] had been arrested in his own father's house.

D'Espina, a Carmelite monk, had occasion in a house at Château-Gontier to see this Jean Rabec whom we have just mentioned. His conversation pleased him, and when the latter was arrested as a Protestant, and taken to Angers, the monk experienced great grief. He followed him to the capital of Anjou, visited him in prison, and endeavored, in leading him back to the Catholic faith, to protect him from his threatened fate. But

[1] See *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, I. 448–456, IV. 321, V. 18–20, VIII. 415–454, IX. 30.

[2] A monk of the Lesser Brothers, who, having acquired some knowledge of Gospel doctrines, threw off his gown at Lausanne, returned to France there to preach the Reformation, and suffered martyrdom at Angers on the 24th of April, 1557.

Rabec set forth his religious convictions with such calmness and skill, that, instead of converting the prisoner, D'Espina felt himself shaken in his own beliefs. When Rabec, condemned to the stake, mounted the platform singing the seventy-ninth Psalm, "The heathen are come into thine inheritance," (which, says Bèze, "he continued to sing although he was lifted up and down in the fire, and his entrails protruded from his abdomen,") D'Espina was profoundly impressed by the scene. He concluded that a religion which inspired such heroism could not be false, and the courage of the martyr brought about the conversion of the monk. At all events, the latter did not at once quit the Church to which he belonged. He hoped to be able to preach according to the inspirations of conscience, while preserving his monastic garb.

The people of Angers appeared in crowds about the pulpit from which D'Espina taught the Gospel doctrine, and for the space of a year he captivated the multitude by his eloquent and persuasive speaking, exhorting his audiences not to depend upon indulgences, pilgrimages, or prayers for the dead, but to repent of their sins, and to cling to the grace of God, through Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding his oratorical success, — perhaps by reason of this success, — he was finally brought under suspicion; a fact which compelled him to retire to Montargis, and put himself under the protection of Renée of France, the Duchess of Ferrara, who was a Protestant. Later, D'Espina was one of the twelve pastors who took part in the Colloquy of Poissy.

Such was the man to whom a call was extended, on the 27th of December, to connect himself, as pastor, with

the church of La Rochelle. "A personage of great renown, and one who has borne great fruit in our churches," adds Philippe Vincent. So that the year 1561 ended under happy auspices for this little congregation: it had secured a pastor well qualified to tend the flock, and gain souls to the Gospel.

IV.

The commencement of the following year, 1562, was rendered notable by the publication of the Edict of January, which accorded to the Reformers the free exercise of their religion, but only outside the limits of the cities, and in the faubourgs. This Edict, although of advantage to the Protestants of France in general, was not so for those of La Rochelle, who had been holding their services in the city itself, and who had consequently more to lose than to gain by its being carried into effect. At all events, they uttered no complaint, and submitted to the new order of things, transferring their religious exercises to the Prée-Maubec.

But, in conforming to the provisions of the Edict of January, the Protestants of La Rochelle lost no time in preferring a request to the King, with a view to obtaining permission to hold their worship in the city, inasmuch as it was already being done without inconvenience to anybody. They urged it as important that this was a frontier city, and that it would remain without defenders, since the greater part of its inhabitants would attend their religious devotions outside its gates. This request, supported by the Mayor, Pineau, and the Governor, the Count of Jarnac, who were both Protestants, was favor-

ably received, and the meetings were resumed in the St. Michael and Gargouillaud Halls.

On the 4th of February in the same year was held at La Rochelle the First Provincial Synod, which discussed divers questions of discipline, and in a spirit from which the Consistory derived a support for the disciplinary measures it was later obliged to take.

Meanwhile, sad news spread through the city. The Duke of Guise, one of the greatest enemies of the Reformation, had caused the massacre of a peaceable assemblage of Protestants at Vassy, and, after having thus opened the bloody era of civil war, had carried off the King and the Queen-mother.

At the news of this daring attempt, the Prince of Condé, Coligny, and other nobles, joined hands to rescue the King and the Queen-mother from the hands of the Guises. They despatched a gentleman named Des Ors to La Rochelle to inform the Consistory of their design, and to sound its disposition. But before taking part in a matter so delicate, this assembly thought it its duty to inform itself of the state of affairs, and assure itself if their Majesties were really captive. They deputed to the court one Thibaud Guillon, who was received very diplomatically, and brought back an evasive reply, leaving doubts still existing as to the object of his mission. At all events, after his report, and by reason of the letters written them by the Prince of Condé, the Rochelais voted a subsidy of three hundred pounds per month to the leaders of the undertaking, — a sum which was increased to sixteen hundred when the Protestants decided to take up arms, — "the whole to be employed in putting the King and the Queen out of captivity," ac-

cording to the terms of the act. Those of La Rochelle did not wish to become any more directly connected with this war, and persisted in preserving neutrality, notwithstanding the decision of the Synod of Saintes, which had pronounced an opinion favorable to this taking up of arms,[1] and the efforts of the Count of La Rochefoucauld to draw them to his cause, even to an attempt to seize the city by surprise. It is believed that this reserve or caution was suggested to them by the Count of Jarnac, Governor of the city, either because he had no confidence in the success of the enterprise, or because he cherished some rancor against its leaders on account of the death of his brother, Sieur de Sainte-Foy, killed near St. Jean d'Angely by some of the Prince's party.

St. Michael's and Gargouillaud Halls becoming daily more and more inadequate to accommodate the multitude attending divine service, the Consistory resolved, on the 6th of April following, to name a Commission charged with the duty of finding a proper place for the celebration of the holy sacrament. They selected the Grand Place de la Bourserie,[2] which they took pains to surround with an enclosure and awnings. On Sunday morning, May 30th, after divine service, the holy sacrament was administered by Pastors Richer, Lavallée, and Faget to an assemblage estimated at not less than seven or eight thousand persons. That same afternoon five hundred

[1] In a Synod assembled at Saintes, and composed of sixty members, "it was resolved," says Theodore de Bèze, "that in good conscience one could and ought to take up arms for the deliverance of the King and the Queen-mother, and for the defence of the religion oppressed by the Guises."

[2] An open space where the Exchange was held. — G. L. C.

guardsmen, who had remained under arms to prevent any surprise, also received the sacrament, at which the Baron of Jarnac, Governor of the city, had himself participated in the morning.

That was a grand day for the church of La Rochelle. Unfortunately, it ended in a manner less edifying than that in which it had begun. "A mania for pulling down images spread in all directions." This species of contagion had imparted itself to the people of La Rochelle, who believed that they were protesting against idolatry, in thus destroying the objects of its veneration and worship; so that during the three or four hours of the evening the friends of order and those who were truly pious had the mortification of seeing the people rush into the churches and pull down the images which they found there.

This outbreak, so much to be regretted from any point of view, was highly censured by the Consistory, who, the second day afterwards, went in a body to the Governor, and repudiated, by the voice of Pastor Lavallée, any connection with the authors of this act of vandalism. Everything had been done so quickly and unexpectedly that it had been impossible to arrest the perpetrators. No one, moreover, had sustained any wound or injury. The demonstration was confined to the breaking of statues and images, a circumstance which led Philippe Vincent to remark, that "it was a species of madness, governed by a certain degree of method."

There was much excitement on this subject, and certain Catholic authors, exaggerating what took place, found occasion to attack the Reformation violently. But in disavowing, in common with all the doctors

among the Reformers, these deplorable excesses, we must distinguish between them and the much more serious excesses which were committed in the other camp, and to exclaim, with Agrippa d'Aubigné, "It must be admitted that there is an important difference between knocking down inanimate images, through zeal for the honor of God, and cruelly destroying the living images of God on account of the hatred and envy that is borne them."

We should have been gratified, therefore, to find that the author of *La Rochelle Protestante* had not confined himself to saying, on this subject, that "the Vassy massacre had a cruel echo in this city; the images and statues in front of the houses were broken, and those in the churches were annihilated." There is, in fact, no comparison between the breaking of some wooden and stone figures, and the massacre of a religious assemblage while offering up its adoration and prayers to the Almighty.

If the day's work at Vassy was a Catholic reprisal for the destruction of some churches, which seems doubtful, it must be confessed that the reprisal was excessive; and it would have been fair to condemn the murder of creatures formed in the likeness of God more severely than the mere destruction of mute and insensate images.

Although Jarnac protested his innocence in this affair, and threatened to punish the guilty, he was suspected of not having viewed with displeasure what had happened, since he was a Protestant, and had tolerated or encouraged similar acts in his own city. It is a fact, at all events, that this incident did not cool his friendship for his co-religionists, and that he continued to give

them proof of his good-will. The 17th of July following, in fact, the Consistory having sent a deputation to petition him to furnish the church with houses of worship, Jarnac approved the request, and granted them the use of the church edifices in which the images had been broken, viz. St. Sauveur and St. Bartholomew.

V.

Furthermore, under the influence of the principles inaugurated by the Reformation, sentiments of piety and morality were far from becoming less rigorous in La Rochelle; for Philippe Vincent reports that, a ship having been lost on the coast, some canvas and other flotsam coming from the wreck were put up for sale; and that one of the elders of the church, having bought some, was publicly censured, on the 14th of February, and compelled to make a formal acknowledgment of his penitence, though he protested that he had not believed he was doing anything wrong, and that his mode of acquiring the property was legal. The same author assures us, that, on the 28th of August following, proceedings were taken before the Governor and magistrates, "to ask them to be good enough to purge the city of several women of bad life who were there, even in the houses of the priests." The 1st of May of the same year, some one having been accused before the Consistory of having spoken of the Virgin Mary in a disrespectful way, serious remonstrances were made with him, although it was impossible to completely convict him of the act. Finally, on the 25th of June, the Prior of the Catholic church of Lagord, having publicly

professed Protestantism, began to preach and administer the holy sacrament to his parishioners, according to the ceremony of the Reformed Church. But the Consistory upheld discipline, and disavowed this holding of service until the Prior should have been received into the holy ministry, if he were found worthy.

Such facts prove incontestably that the Reformers watched rigorously over public morals, and that it was their firm intention to have order and decency prevail in the church, as well as in the city.

But at the death of Antoine of Bourbon, Catherine de Medicis renewed the severities against the Protestants. By reason of the vexatious measures to which they were subjected in all parts of France, one of the most illustrious and most modest adherents of the Reformation, Bernard Palissy, was obliged to leave Saintes, where he followed the calling of a potter, and, to insure his own safety, took refuge in La Rochelle. He was there received with the consideration due his character, and there also he met persons worthy to appreciate his talents. In this city were published the greater part of the works which have given lustre to his name. Every one knows the reply that this man, eminent at once by his piety and his learning, made to Henry III. While Palissy was a prisoner in the Bastile, the King, after having had a conversation with him on the subject of the sequestration of his property, ended by saying, "My good man, if you don't come to some arrangement with yourself on this subject of religion, I am compelled to leave you in the hands of my enemies." "Sire," answered the faithful Christian, "I had been entirely prepared to give up my life for the glory of

God! Even had I felt any regret before, it would certainly now be dismissed, since I have heard my great King utter the words, 'I am compelled.' It is something that you, Sire, and all those who compel you, can never do with me, for I know how to die."

VI.

The defeat of Duras by Montluc, on the field of Perigord, had brought Guienne under the rule of Montpensier. To strengthen his conquest, he thought to make himself master of La Rochelle. Not daring to take the place by open force, he sought to gain possession by stratagem, and on the 26th of October surreptitiously obtained admittance, escorted by sixty companies, forming an effective force of between seven and eight thousand men. Notwithstanding the lively opposition inspired by the announcement of his visit on his return from Poitiers to Bordeaux, the Rochelais, while persisting in not taking up arms against the King, could not refuse to open to him their gates, only recently closed to the Count of Rochefoucauld, one of the lieutenants of the Prince. Events proved that they had good reason to mistrust the presence of such a guest; for no sooner had he entered the city "than he treated them according to the King's ordinances, and his own pleasure, putting in a garrison of occupation, and taking away their religion, their liberty, and their property," as D'Aubigné expresses it.

The blame of this enterprise fell upon Jarnac, who had either been ignorant of it, or unwilling to prevent it, and its consequences proved disastrous for the city.

On the 13th of November, in fact, Montpensier, a mortal enemy of Protestantism, issued an ordinance re-establishing mass, and replacing the images. He did not stop with restoring the Catholic worship, temporarily interrupted, at La Rochelle; but, in violation of the promises he had made on his entrance, not to change or alter anything, he now forbade all exercise of worship other than that of the Catholic religion. He enjoined the pastors to leave the city; he removed the Mayor, Jean Pineau, as being too zealous a Reformer, and put in his place his brother, William Pineau, who professed more moderate opinions. It is even claimed that, at the instigation of his confessor, Claude Babelot, he proposed in council to destroy the city to its foundations, in order to deprive the Protestants of this their safe retreat.

The Rochelais now began to repent that they had not embraced the Prince of Condé's cause. But it was too late. Although Montpensier only remained twenty days in La Rochelle, his visit cost the church and the city dear: the church, in that it lost its liberty and security; the city, in that it suffered pillagings, larcenies, violation of women and maidens, and burning of houses, for which no redress was made,[1] and in that it was obliged to pay considerable sums of money to rid itself of so dangerous a guest.

Having regulated everything according to his own views, Montpensier threw a garrison into the towers of La Chaine and La Lanterne, — the command of which he intrusted to Captain Richelieu, a former monk, who had more liking for a military than for a monastic life, — and then departed from a city in which he had left

[1] Amos Barbot.

such odious traces of his passage. Scarcely had he gone when the inhabitants, a majority of whom were Protestants, wrote to the King to claim the benefit of the Edict of January, of which Montpensier's ordinances had deprived them. Their claim was approved, and Evangelical worship was restored. The ministers were recalled, with the exception of Ambrose Faget, one of the most excellent and most zealous, according to the testimony of Amos Barbot.

The *régime* imposed by Montpensier had profoundly stirred the spirits of the people of La Rochelle. There were in that city certain elements ready to rise at the first signal. Cognizant of this feeling, one of the partisans of the Prince of Condé, a Captain Chesnet, of the Isle of Oleron, thought that the favorable moment for attempting a *coup de main* had arrived. He assembled a number of malecontents, and, having embarked with some soldiers in disguise, entered the port of La Rochelle, and hid himself in the house of one Perrot, opposite the church of St. Jean. On the 8th of February, the day fixed for the execution of his plan, Chesnet, sword in hand, followed by about thirty soldiers, ran through the streets, crying, *Vive l'Evangile!* At this call, the malecontents came out to swell his following, and soon five or six hundred armed men gathered around him. Finding no resistance on the part of the authorities, who had not, as yet, had time to know what they were about, they took possession of the city gates, and imprisoned in one of the towers the presiding official, Claude d'Angliers, a firm and loyal man, whom they knew to be opposed to their designs, while the Mayor, William Pineau, overwhelmed with fear, had hidden himself away in a

stable in the neighborhood of the Hôtel de Ville. Chesnet now found himself master of the place; but his triumph was not of long duration. A few hours later, D'Angliers succeeded in getting out of prison, assembled some devoted friends, and once more aroused the courage of Mayor Pineau, who had been paralyzed by fear. The latter, regaining his senses, put himself at the head of these citizens, who were faithful to the King and friendly to order. He repeated to his company the cry of the conspirators, *Vive l'Evangile!* and, profiting by the indecision which reigned among the people, had the chief of the rebels arrested, and himself remained, in turn, master of the city.

Thus ended this *émeute*, which was evidently nothing more than a reaction against the measures taken by Montpensier; for the Rochelais had on several occasions refused to declare for the Prince of Condé, and had not Montpensier, by the manner in which he treated them, made them regret their fidelity to their sovereign, Chesnet and his accomplices would never have found any support among them.

But Gospel worship was scarcely re-established at La Rochelle, under the direction of Pastor Lavallée, who held service publicly for fifteen days in the Canton (Ward) de la Caille, when M. de Burie, the King's Lieutenant in Guienne, being informed of what had occurred in the city, hastened thither with five hundred men and a provost-marshal. His first act was to interdict religious worship to the Protestants. He inaugurated legal proceedings against the prisoners of the Chesnet conspiracy, seven of whom were hung, and he drove from the city those who were supposed to have been the

principal actors in the attempt, notably the Pastor Lavallée, who had been unfortunately mixed up with the rebels.

However, the Edict of Amboise, dated the 19th of March, 1563, which assured the Reformers liberty of conscience, came to the relief of those who were prevented from holding their worship publicly. This edict, denominated one of pacification, merely accorded the exercise of worship outside the cities, or in the faubourgs, and only proved partially satisfactory to the Protestants, who were obliged sometimes to attend service at a great distance, and that too when means of communication were difficult. However, La Rochelle being specially mentioned in the decree, an effort was made to conform thereto, and they again began holding services at the Prée-Maubec, which, at this period, was outside the walls. This lasted about two months. Then the grounds of public safety, previously appealed to, having been anew brought to the King's attention, the Rochelais were authorized to hold their religious assemblages in the interior of the city. On the 8th of June services were resumed in the Gargouillaud and St. Michael Halls. The original letter on this subject, written upon parchment and addressed by Charles IX. to the Baron de Jarnac, still exists in the Consistory archives, under the title of "Commission to M. de Jarnac, Governor of La Rochelle, to suffer the Exercise of the Reformed Religion in two Houses in that City. July 14, 1563."

"This establishment by authority of the King is the more observable," says Philippe Vincent, "inasmuch as the Church, which had been hitherto vacillating, and exposed to divers interruptions, found itself from this

moment strengthened on a firm basis, and no longer troubled."

The hour for religious gatherings was, from that time, fixed by act of the Consistory, dated June 19th, and it was decided that a bell should summon the faithful to service. This fact, unimportant in itself, has nevertheless a great significance, in that it proves that the privileges of the city were henceforth accorded to Protestantism.

VII.

The church daily increased in numbers; the peace it enjoyed was complete; but it profited by it to provide new pastors. In consequence, calls were extended to Noël Magnen, who was serving the church of Tonnay-Charente, and to Odet de Nort, who filled a long and fruitful ministry in our city. Lavallée was also recalled; but the reasons which had caused him to leave La Rochelle retarded his return, and it was not till 1568 that he was enabled to resume his functions. The place occupied by Pastor Odet de Nort in the annals we record is too considerable to allow us to overlook the circumstances by which he was led to take control of this flock.

The offspring of a father who was an ardent Catholic, he had embraced the Reformation, to the great displeasure of his family, which felt itself sadly scandalized to see its son profess heresy. The sincerity of his convictions was such that he devoted himself to the holy ministry. After being admitted to this charge, he was sent to Toulouse in 1561 by the Synod of St. Foy. Being present at the defeat of the Marquis of Duras, wounded

on the head, and in a state of complete nudity, he was taken with other prisoners to La Rochelle, which, since the Duc de Montpensier's surprise, had been left under guard of one of his companions, who hoped thereby to realize some profit. By a merciful dispensation of Providence, Odet was lodged at the house of a doctor named Delaunay, whose wife was a Protestant. The prisoner perceived this, and made a confidante of his hostess, an intelligent woman, who resorted to a subterfuge to save him. She made complaint that he was a charge and a burden to her, owing to the care that his wound required, and by reason of this complaint she obtained his liberty on condition of a moderate ransom. Thus once more master of himself, De Nort was supported by the church, and retired to Nieul, a town in the environs of La Rochelle, where he for some time preached secretly. Emerging from his retreat as soon as circumstances would permit, he was finally called to La Rochelle, where for thirty years he carried on his ministry, and where later we shall find him at work under circumstances most critical.

Whilst the church was provided with excellent pastors, the word of God regularly preached, and ecclesiastical discipline held with a firm hand, the Consistory's censure was following up those whom the civil law could not touch. The greedy, the drunken, the blasphemous, the unchaste, were one after another brought to account for their irregularities. In this way it came about that a well-known merchant of the city, having speculated in wheat during a season of scarcity in the means of subsistence, was condemned to make public reparation, and give the poor the profit he had realized.

But this moral severity was not to everybody's liking, and there were numerous stubborn opponents of the Consistory's censures. The historian Arcère, while acknowledging that a close watch was kept upon public morals, yet seems to approve of this opposition. He reproaches the ministers with a sort of disposition to worry people; he insinuates that they were animated by an austere and rugged virtue, which mistakes temper for reason and severity for justice. It is surprising to find a man of his profession, a father in the Oratoire, so little in sympathy with those who made war upon scandals and vices. There is more truth in the remark which Pastor Vincent makes on this subject: "There have always been licentious people; but our predecessors of old, as well as we of to-day, have done a duty in repressing them."

VIII.

The election of a new Mayor proved, during the year 1563, the occasion for a very active contest between the religious and the political parties; the latter supporting Michel Guy, whom they believed favorable to their interests, while the former supported Pierre de Grandin, who agreed more nearly with them. They were both elected,[1] and the management of the city's affairs was for the moment placed in a quite novel position by reason of this double choice. But an order from the court soon put an end to this rivalry by installing Michel Guy as Mayor of La Rochelle. He was even confirmed or maintained in this office by Charles IX. during the two

[1] This is one of the mysteries of French elections which the translator will not attempt to fathom.

following years, although he had not received a majority of the votes cast. This fact did not help to calm people's feelings.

In this same year, a contagious disease, lasting until the end of October, made great ravages at La Rochelle. Hugues Pontard, the King's Attorney, died of it, and his body was borne to the cemetery by the deacons of the new church. Although the majority in the city was Protestant, the Reformers were not publicly buried, as yet, and Arcère remarks that this was the first instance of the funeral of a Protestant having taken place in public ; which indicates a progress of opinion in their favor, and a step toward the conquest of their civil rights.[1]

Although Michel Guy professed Protestantism, and did not show himself hostile to the liberties of his fellow-believers, he kept on good terms with the court, and treated the Catholic party with deference. Under his administration, several persons having been delegated to go before the King on the subject of the censures pronounced by the Consistory, he joined the malecontents, who were unwilling either to be sought after or warned, "and who," says Philippe Vincent, "caused great trouble to the unhappy Church of God." This circumstance was little calculated to conciliate the people's sympathies toward him, or make them forget that he was Mayor by the Governor's will rather than by that of his fellow-citizens.

[1] La Rochelle, like the rest of the kingdom, changed the former system of counting the years. The King, by an edict given to Roussillon, had commanded that the year should thereafter be begun with the month of January. Prior to that time, in Aquitaine, in which was included La Rochelle, the new year had begun with the 25th of March.

IX.

However, the court knew how to take half-way measures in anything relating to the religious affairs of the country. It sought expedients, rather than suffered itself to be guided by principles of justice. It made laws to-day, only to abrogate or evade them to-morrow. The edict of the 19th of March, granted in favor of the Protestants, accorded them certain privileges, but the declaration of the 4th of August took away with one hand that which had been given by the other. These vacillations of authority, or rather this seesaw system, these incessant caprices coming on the heels of concessions already made, surrounded the court with an air of bad faith which gave ground for distrust in the hearts of the Reformers. The Rochelais, in particular, felt greatly disquieted about it. Sinister rumors were afloat about the voyage of Charles IX. to Bayonne. It was pretended that he went in order to have an understanding with the Duke of Alba and the king of Spain to crush out Protestantism. Religious liberties were menaced; no dependence could be placed upon the promises of the court; a general exasperation was the result, and the pastors made themselves the echo of popular sentiment. They set themselves to work speaking against the intolerance of the Papists and the perfidies of the court, calling to account the Queen-mother, who exercised a preponderating influence on her son's mind, while not always preserving the deference due to royal majesty.

Such manifestations were significant; they gave warning that the Rochelais, despairing of finding at court that justice and protection to which they were

entitled, and weary of the efforts of influence to lead them back under the detested yoke of Catholicism, would not be slow to emerge from their long preserved neutrality, and to rush into the party of the Prince of Condé, who offered them the religious and social guaranties they had so long sought. This was very well understood by the Governor, Jarnac, who was daily losing his influence, and who profited by the presence of Charles IX. in Guienne to persuade him to come to La Rochelle, with a view to re-establishing his compromised authority, placing a garrison there, and despoiling the franchises of the town.[1]

The King's journey being decided upon, the Rochelais made ready to receive him in a manner worthy of a sovereign. Never had a prince been received within their walls with so much pomp and solemnity. Triumphal arches were raised above the route of his passage. There was a lavish display of devices and emblems. On the 14th of September, 1565, Charles IX. entered the city, accompanied by his mother, by his brother, the Duke of Anjou, and by his sister Marguerite. But seeing the Constable Montmorency angrily throw up with his sword the traditional silken cord[2] which the aldermen had stretched across the gate of Cougnes, and hearing the King himself refuse, notwithstanding

[1] According to Arcère, Jarnac, who was *par excellence* a politician, sometimes displayed haughty conduct and equivocal manners in his relations with the Rochelais.

[2] It was an ancient custom, whenever a sovereign entered La Rochelle, to stretch a silk cord before the gate by which he was to pass, in order that he might pause and promise to respect the city's liberties and franchises. This custom was explained to Montmorency, who took no notice of it, but sent the cord flying upward with his sword, remarking that such a custom was out of date.

the Mayor's entreaties, to take the accustomed oath to respect the privileges of the city, the Rochelais were reminded of the visit which Francis I. had made them under similar circumstances, and could not hide from themselves the fact, that they were in the presence of an angered master, who came among them to take revenge and punish them.

In fact, notwithstanding the kind and eager welcome tendered their sovereign, and in spite of the magnificent gifts they offered, the Rochelais could find no favor at his hands. Instigated by his mother Catherine, who detested La Rochelle, Charles IX. showed himself cold and austere from the time of his entry to that of his departure. He displayed his ill-will by measures calculated to wound the inhabitants on subjects which they held most dear. I refer to their religious convictions, and their municipal liberties. The City Council (Corps de Ville), composed of a hundred aldermen, was reduced to twenty-four, under the presidency of the Governor, who was henceforth invested with all the Mayor's military prerogatives. They took away the artillery and put a garrison in the towers of La Chaine and St. Nicolas. Magistrates were enjoined to protect the Catholic religion, and to take extraordinary proceedings against any pastors who should make use of seditious remarks. The pastor Lavallée was ordered out of the city, and commanded to remain in exile under penalty of death. The civil and criminal Lieutenant, Jean de Pierres, and six bourgeois citizens of a lower degree, were banished.

After publishing these various decrees, the King set out with his court, without even permitting any one to

show him the slightest courtesy. "During his stay at La Rochelle," says Amos Barbot, "no services were held, nor any religious exercises, each one apprehending some penalty."

The visit of Charles IX. to La Rochelle was then a sort of triumph for the Catholic party. They took advantage of it to have a general procession, with cross and banners at its head, a thing which had not been seen for three or four years past. But after the King's departure the Reformers resumed the exercise of their religion. Two months had hardly passed before the Queen-mother, faithful to the "seesaw system" which she thought necessary to the success of her son's reign, made him restore everything to the footing on which it had been before his trip to La Rochelle: the town government was restored, and the Protestants enjoyed the advantages of the Edict of Pacification.

X.

In 1566, the Assessor Blandin, having been nominated Mayor, caused the college to be built on the site of the Franciscan convent. Above all, people admired the entrance portal upon which, beside the arms of the King and the city, were carved those of the Queen of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, Gaspard de Coligny, and other protectors of the Reformed religion, who had contributed considerable sums toward this establishment, "as evidence of the desire and longing they felt to render said college a seminary of piety and a nursery for the encouragement of the holy ministry of religion."[1] This is a

[1] A. Barbot.

fact, which, it may be remarked in passing, proves that the chiefs of Protestantism were not exclusively preoccupied with interests of a political nature.

The term of office of M. Blandin as Mayor being on the point of expiring, a successor had to be found, which was not an easy matter in the midst of the excitement prevailing in the city. François Pontard, Lord of Treuil-Charais, and son of Hugues Pontard, king's attorney, was elected, at the age of twenty-seven, under the auspices of the President, Claude d'Angliers, and of the Governor, Jarnac, who very soon after repented having favored his election. Like all ambitious persons, Pontard at once sought to make himself popular, and soon entered into communication with his cousin, Lord of Saint-Hermine, actively devoted to the Prince of Condé, and who assisted him in bringing about the radical revolution which was soon to be accomplished in the place.

We are compelled, in this narration, to separate the history of the Reformed Church from the history of the community; and we feel more especially the necessity of emphasizing this distinction at the moment of the *coup d'état* which allied La Rochelle for more than half a century to the destinies of the Protestant party of France. It is important to place upon its real author, that is to say, upon Mayor Pontard, the responsibility for this revolution. Advanced by fortune to the chief magistracy of the city, Pontard hesitated to take a decisive part, and resisted the Prince of Condé's solicitations, until he was dragged by his mother, Marie Bœuf, and his lawyer, Jean de la Haize, into a course in which he was soon even to outstrip them.

The second war of religion broke out in 1567. The liberty-destroying projects of the court were a mystery to no one. Sinister rumors were abroad. It was asserted that the king of Spain, the Duke of Alba, the Queen-mother, and the Guises, wished to exterminate all who belonged to the Protestant faith. Under these circumstances, the Rochelais, fearing for their religious freedom, did not hesitate to depart from the neutrality which they had preserved, and Saint-Hermine came to assume command of the city in the name of the Prince of Condé.[1] But from the moment in which the Rochelais took part in the civil war, they saw that they had provided themselves with a master. Undertaken in defence of liberty, the war entailed for them a temporary loss. Instead of a protector, the Rochelais found a tyrant in their Mayor Pontard. By the aid of the more violent persons, and under pretence of interest in the cause, which was dishonored by such excesses, the churches and houses of the Catholics, and then those of the moderate Protestants, were broken into and pillaged. Barbot, in response to public clamor, accuses Pontard and his successor Salbert of having enriched themselves by awarding, in their capacity as mayors, the spoils of the churches to their own private agents. Pontard had

[1] La Haize, a lawyer and member of the commune, charged with vindicating this serious step in the eyes of his fellow-citizens, gave three principal reasons for it: —

1st. Liberty of conscience, which was constantly being called in question by the party of the court.

2d. The national interest, compromised by the King's advisers in their relations with Spain, and which Condé, a prince of the blood, would preserve.

3d. The pressure exercised upon the city by the presence of Governor Jarnac's garrison.

had services established in the partially destroyed edifices, but he concerned himself so little with religious interests that he soon afterward had all the churches and houses that would interfere with the defence of the place torn down. All inhabitants, without respect to persons, were employed night and day upon the fortifications. If we are to believe some stories, even blood was shed by order of this dictator. A bailiff and an attorney at the presidial court, imprisoned with some priests in the tower of La Lanterne, are said to have been stabbed and thrown into the sea. The troops of Montluc were not far distant from La Rochelle, and feelings of rage proved in them a stimulus worse than had even been expected of the Catholics. The journal of Michel Paqueteau, a contemporary of these events, does not, it is true, mention this last atrocity: it is not until fifty years later that it is found recorded in a manuscript of Amos Barbot, known only by a Catholic copy; and his story, in any case open to question, must naturally have grown in dimensions when it fell under the pen of writers who undertook to stigmatize La Rochelle when it was conquered in 1628.

The author of *La Rochelle protestante, Recherches politiques et religieuses*, is far from being of this number; but we should not abandon this unhappy period of Pontard's domination without taking up an assertion we have been surprised to find under that ordinarily impartial author's pen. "Protestantism," says he, characterizing this period, "the sole form of worship permitted, reigned as a tyrant within our walls." To speak truth, he should have said Pontard, and not Protestantism. Pontard, in fact, was no Protestant pope, personating

the Reformation, as the Popes personate Catholicism; and to impute to the Reformation the misdeeds or the exactions of an ambitious man, who made use of this pretext to favor his passions or his interests, is not only vicious reasoning, but also a lack of fairness which we cannot approve. Protestantism is not by nature tyrannical. It has bestowed liberty wherever it has established itself, and it is impossible that it should have enthroned tyranny when it found a place in our city. A decided believer in freedom of worship, we regret the transient prohibition of the Catholic services in La Rochelle; but how can one forget that it was the incessant intolerance of the Catholics which drove the Protestants to this step? If the former had not commenced by putting the newly born Reformation under the ban, if they had accorded it support and kindness, who can be persuaded that the Reformation would ever have taken the initiative in these excesses, or given itself up, without provocation, to such reprisals?

I would say the same with regard to an expression equally to be regretted from the same author, who, after having recalled the cruelties, more or less exaggerated, of which we have just spoken, adds: "The pastors Folion and De Nort were not strangers, it appears, to these sad occurrences." It would have been better to cite the proof of such complicity, instead of stopping at this sort of insinuation in regard to two men invested with the office of pastors. In the absence of such proof, which should have accompanied an accusation of this nature, we must say that it does not appear to us at all probable that these pastors approved of such measures. They may have committed errors in

the course of their ministry. Who is there that dares assure himself of never making a mistake under circumstances as difficult as those under which these pastors lived? But there is a great difference between such frailty and the actual complicity or participation charged upon them. De Nort, especially, was one of the most honorable of men. "A great servant of God," say Ph. Vincent and Amos Barbot, "having left such a name that there was neither little nor great who held not his memory in veneration." In giving it to be understood that they had not been strangers to odious acts, M. Callot has not, we are persuaded, had any intention to calumniate their memories, but he has nevertheless uttered an uncalled for assertion.

However, the peace of Longjumeau, signed the 27th of March, 1568, came to suspend hostilities, which had been continued ever since the preceding year. The news of this happy event was brought to La Rochelle on the 8th of April. "At once, arms were laid down," says Ph. Vincent, "and all lived in peace, one with another." But this news was not everywhere received with equal favor. In several localities, its circulation was prohibited, notably at Toulouse, where a gentleman attached to the Prince of Condé's suite, who had brought it thither, was put to death. This presaged no good, and the calm did not last long. Hostilities recommenced, and were at first unfavorable to the Protestants. But La Rochelle was not unprepared for the conflict. Pontard and Saint-Hermine, enemies of the court, having profited by the Governor's (Jarnac's) absence to strip him of power, in the name of the Prince of Condé, had been forcing the inhabitants to labor without rest upon repairs

to the fortifications, as has already been stated ; so that, on the resumption of hostilities, the place was in good condition for defence.

Vainly did the herald of Marshal Vieilleville, the Governor of Luçon, present himself and try to persuade the inhabitants to admit a garrison ; the Rochelais, remembering the treatment shown the Reformers of Lyons, Dijon, Tours, Orleans, Bourges, and other places, obstinately refused to obey this demand ; they were willing to intrust the guardianship of their liberties to none but themselves.

XI.

From this moment La Rochelle, which had hitherto played but a secondary part in the Reformers' resistance in arms, became the chief stronghold of Protestantism. On the 11th of September, 1568, a treaty was concluded between the Rochelais and the Prince of Condé, represented by Coligny and La Rochefoucauld, under which the former promised obedience and service to the latter, as the Protector and Defender of all the Reformed churches of the kingdom, while Condé, on his part, engaged to maintain their privileges, franchises, liberties, and exemptions. In consequence, the Prince entered the city with his family on the 19th of September, soon followed by Jeanne d'Albret and Henry of Navarre, who came to seek a refuge within its ramparts. The civil wars resulting from this alliance belong to the political history of the country, and would hardly be appropriate to this sketch.

Beaten at Jarnac and Moncontour, deprived of the sword of Condé, and of Coligny's brother, Dandelot,

who had died on the battle-field, the Reformers fell back to La Rochelle, which, but for the devotion of Vergano, the engineer, and of Captain La Noue, would have been exposed to great peril. The Edict of St. Germain-en-Laye (1570) came to suspend hostilities anew, and on the 1st of January, 1571, the Catholic and Protestant notables of the city, in presence of royal commissioners sent for that purpose, made oath, in the name of their fellow-citizens, to live in peace and harmony with each other.

In both camps, the genuineness of this peace was suspected. To cement it, Marshal de Cossé sent emissaries to La Rochelle to treat with Jeanne d'Albret for the re-establishment of mass. He made her overtures for the marriage of her son Henry to Marguerite, the King's sister. A little while after, Coligny wedded, in second nuptials, at La Rochelle, Jacqueline, the Countess of Entremont, who, in her admiration for his character, had finally become enamored of the old Admiral, and had come to this city to contract a union, which was, however, of brief duration. Beside incurring the wrath of her lord, the Duke of Savoy, she drew upon herself terrible persecutions. On the same day, at the same hour, and in the same temple, Teligny was united to Louise, the Admiral's daughter. This double alliance was celebrated with great solemnity. The city was filled with lords and ladies of the Protestant party. Their presence heightened the *éclat* of the ceremony, in which also a great number of pastors, who had come to La Rochelle to attend the Synod then about to open, took part.

It was in the month of April, 1571, that we find inaugurated at La Rochelle this celebrated assemblage,

which was the seventh National Synod of the Reformed Churches of France, and the first held with the assent of the King, who had authorized it by letters-patent. The Queen of Navarre, Henry of Béarn, her son, Henry of Bourbon, the Prince of Condé, Admiral Coligny, and Louis of Nassau, were present, and participated in the consultations, while other prominent personages took a direct part in the deliberations in the capacity of deputies from the churches.

The assembly's first care was to restore to a uniform text the Confession of Faith, prepared in 1559 by the Paris Synod, and printed in divers manners. Three authentic copies of this memorable document were deposited in the archives of La Rochelle, Béarn, and Geneva.[1] This creed, known in history as the "Confession of Faith of La Rochelle," is divided into forty articles, and presents a summary of the essential doctrines of Christianity.

The assemblage also occupied itself with the subject of ecclesiastical discipline, and Coligny advised lenity and charity in the imposition of these disciplinary penalties, which consistories had the power to inflict. Otherwise, they abstained from any discussion of public matters, confining themselves to maintaining the distinction between the two powers, temporal and spiritual, as well in the interest of the state as in that of the Church.[2]

[1] The first of these copies has been, we are assured, recently discovered at Fontenay-le-Comte; the second was lost during the religious wars; and the author of this work has seen the third, which still exists in the library of Geneva, and a fac-simile of which, upon parchment, executed with scrupulous fidelity, has been presented to our own city library by the generosity of M. Callot.

[2] See *Histoire des Synodes Nationaux*, by De Félice.

In presence of the passionate outcries made by certain schools of our day against every dogmatical creed; considering the supreme disdain with which the partisans of a confession of faith are treated; listening to the taunts of exclusiveness and intolerance so promiscuously thrown at them, even sufficiently to call up the spectre of Torquemada; — one is surprised into asking whether the servants of God who in 1559 and 1571 made this beautiful profession of their belief were fanatics of the Inquisition; or instruments of tyranny, secret enemies of the liberty of conscience, ambitious of the *rôle* of Popes and Councils, and desiring to substitute a Protestant despotism for a Catholic despotism; or men of integrity, subject to the prejudices of their age, but who were unaware of their error, and who labored, unwittingly, to strangle the manifestations of religious thought.

Nothing of the kind! Our fathers, at Paris and at La Rochelle, were fervent Christians, who claimed for others as for themselves the right of inquiry, but who did not separate the precept of St. Paul, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good"; they did not assume to be always questioning, yet never holding fast to anything. They did not constitute free inquiry the sole dogma of their faith; they saw in it simply a means to religion. They did not know how to establish a church otherwise than by laying its foundation on those doctrines without which there can be no longer any church. They well understood that every gathering of faithful people is bound to declare what it believes and what it hopes, not in order to impose upon others the doctrines which it professes, but to show

proper respect for those doctrines, by not seeming to screen itself behind doubtful or equivocal phrases, and by holding them up to the world as a standard around which those who sympathize with its principles may freely rally. The Church confesses her faith, not to exercise any pressure upon the conscience, or to molest those who think differently, but in order that she herself may not be molested by free-thinkers,—in order that none may do violence to her own opinions. She does not ignore the fact that each of us has the right, at his own risk and peril, to be a sceptic, a deist, an atheist, a pantheist, a materialist, or what not. But she is equally aware that it is her duty to guard herself against these injurious tendencies, and in confessing her faith she avails herself of her right of defence against the assumptions of those who would wish to carry these unhappy teachings into the gospel pulpit, and expound them to a confiding people. For, again, if a church has no creed, how can its faith be respected, — not only, I mean, by the godless man who would endeavor to preach atheism, but even by a priest of the Romish Church, a Brahmin, or by a Ulema, who, under pretext of free inquiry and religious independence, might undertake to substitute the religion of the Pope, of Brahma, or of Mahomet for that of the Gospel? It is thus a barrier that she offers to that unrestrained liberty of teaching, which, like an unchained lion, finally ravages and destroys all. It is a question of ownership, I might say; for each one has an interest in retaining that which he owns. Now the Church's treasure is her faith, and to argue it with thieves and sophists, she must know where she stands. In a word, the dogmatic creed is, for those who are already in-

structed, a means of protection against the follies and the culpable attempts of those who instruct.[1] No doubt, confessions of faith, and the synods that draw them up, are not infallible: it is not in their power to remedy all the evils in the Church, which is in a state of imperfection here below, and which will always have its troubles. But even though the work accomplished be intrinsically transitory, and susceptible of improvement, though it be never an adequate expression of the Holy Spirit, it is nevertheless a fact that these creeds represent the normal condition of a church which desires to return to them again whenever she may have deserted them, and which plunges into a condition of anarchy and confusion the moment she is deprived of this element of calm and progress. So that the Assembly of La Rochelle rendered eminent services to the Reformation, in shaping its faith and its discipline; while those who disparage its work are ungrateful and degenerate children, who retain no trace of Protestantism save free inquiry, denying the faith which is its ultimate goal, — that faith which constitutes its honor and its life.

XII.

While the Reformers were thus enjoying a precarious peace, terrible events were impending at court. Witnessing the preparations at their very gates under pre-

[1] Let it be here remarked, that, by a singular contradiction, the opponents of confessions of faith are partisans of national churches, or of a union of church and state, since no government can consent to recognize and make an allowance of salary to a church without demanding some knowledge of the religious and moral principles it professes, that is to say, without exacting some confession of faith.

text of an expedition to Florida, the Rochelais seemed to have a presentiment of what was coming. They wrote most urgently to Coligny and the King of Navarre, begging them to be on their guard, and not to trust the allurements of the court.

Unfortunately this wise counsel was not listened to; instead of opening his eyes to the daily increasing dangers, Coligny sought to reassure the Rochelais in regard to the armaments of Brouage and the conspiracies at Paris. Misled by the fair promises of the court, and the affectionate demonstrations of Charles IX., Coligny took no notice of the warnings he was constantly receiving from the Rochelais. He could not credit any such perfidy, any such perversity on the part of his sovereign, and he was the victim of his own confidence. Saint Bartholomew, that day which a celebrated magistrate of the sixteenth century would have wished to be able to eliminate "from the memory of mankind," came to illumine France with its lurid horrors. The Protestants were doomed to death, and the Admiral was one of the first singled out for the assassin's steel. Chased even to his residence, he was poignarded without pity, and his body, thrown out of one of the windows, became the subject of the lowest outrages.

Thus perished this valiant captain, at once a statesman and a warrior, a Christian eminent for his piety and his moral virtues; thus was assassinated in a cowardly manner, by the hired bravoes of the Guises, of Charles IX., and of Catherine, one of the best friends of La Rochelle, and one of the noblest defenders of Protestantism.

After Coligny's death, Huguenot blood flowed in streams at the capital. "All the horrors that Rome had

witnessed in the days of Sylla and Marius, and under the second triumvirate, were repeated in the heart of a Christian city," says a Catholic author, "and were repeated there with a barbarity that nature ignored, and of which one would not have suspected the French capable. Soon, in the provinces, the sword sacrificed a host of citizens. It seemed to be less a question of punishing guilty ones, than of destroying men's lives, and ravaging the whole of France." [1]

The fears manifested by the Rochelais were fully justified by the massacres of which they received the horrible news, and they had all the more occasion to rejoice that they had not lent an ear to the proposals and assurances of the court, since the Queen-mother cherished sinister intentions toward them. A few days before the tragedy in Paris, in fact, this arrogant and astute woman had sent to Strozzi, who was collecting a body of troops in Saintonge, the following despatch, with an order not to open it until the 24th of August.

"I give you notice that to-day, the 24th of August, the Admiral and all the Huguenots who were here have been killed. At once take diligent measures to make yourself master of La Rochelle, and serve the Huguenots who fall into your hands the same as we have served those here. Be careful to make no mistake, as you fear to displease the King my son, and myself.

"CATHERINE."

After having sent deputies to Brouage, where Strozzi and Baron de la Garde were, under pretext of gaining information concerning the Paris massacres, but in reality to sound the designs of the court, the Rochelais, in spite of the pacific assurances given them by these two

[1] Arcère, *Histoire de la Ville de La Rochelle*, Book III. p. 402.

commissioners, resolved to fortify themselves against the perils which menaced them, and took the necessary steps to defend their ramparts with energy. Divers attempts at a settlement, in which La Noue himself was chosen as mediator, proved unsuccessful. Negotiations were broken off. Efforts were made to renew them after the opening of hostilities, but all was futile. The Rochelais, knowing that they could place no confidence in the promises of the court, showed themselves intractable. Convinced that the only safety for them and all Reformers was in a successful war, they were willing to take the chances of it, and did not recoil from the horrors of a siege, declaring that they liked fighting better than chasing an illusory peace, since their enemies were determined not to carry out the stipulations they had signed. Biron then caused an advance of the royal troops; the city was invested by land and sea, and siege operations were vigorously carried on under direction of the Duke of Anjou, who assumed command of the besieging army from the month of February, 1573.[1]

XIII.

It does not enter into our plan to recount the varied phases of this memorable siege, which conferred so much honor upon the Rochelais arms. Let us confine ourselves to stating that its period of duration was about nine months, during which thirty thousand one hun-

[1] The Literary Society of La Rochelle published, in 1856, *L'Histoire du Siége de La Rochelle en* 1573, translated from the Latin of Philip Cauriana, preceded by a bibliographic sketch of the siege by Mr. L. Delayant, and accompanied by a map of the city in 1573, as compared with its actual boundary as given by Mr. E. Jourdan.

dred and seventy-three cannon-shots were fired at the city, nine principal assaults and more than twenty lesser ones made, and nearly seventy mines directed against the place, one of which last came near killing the chronicler Brantôme, who himself confesses that "he had never before tasted such a fricassee." The loss of the Rochelais amounted to about twelve hundred men; that of the Royalists, to between twenty and twenty-two thousand. The Duke of Aumale, the engineer Vergano, who had abandoned the Reformation to go over to Catholicism, Caussens, one of the principal actors in the St. Bartholomew affair, and others, met their fate in these terrible combats, in which the besieged, sustained by religious enthusiasm, and by the love of country, performed genuine prodigies of valor.

But even if we cannot report all the deeds which rendered this glorious struggle memorable, shall we say nothing of those indomitable men who displayed an energy and a patience equal to every test, even in the midst of the greatest perils? Shall we not render homage to the brave and faithful La Noue, who was unwearied in preaching peace, even while doing battle for the cause so dear to him? How can we restrain a lively sympathy for this loyal and indefatigable warrior, suspected by the city government, and even by the pastors themselves, receiving a blow at the hands of the fiery La Place, and yet having enough self-control to hold up the aggressor to the just indignation of those who had witnessed the insult?[1] How can we refrain from a men-

[1] André de Mazières, surnamed La Place, had a weak mind, and was deposed shortly after this deplorable occurrence, "*pastorali munere depositus*," says the historian De Thou, who informs us that La Noue had

tion of that terrible *Encensoir* (Censer),[1] vomiting out death upon its assailants, and that famous Gospel Bastion, nicknamed "the lions' den," which sustained alone almost the entire shock of the assault, and inspired such terror in the soldiers of the royal army that they finally refused to march against it? How fail to admire this heroic population, who repaired by night the damages which the bullets had made by day, and who continued to fight without any diminution in their ardor? Or how pass over in silence the conduct of those intrepid women who remained by the side of the combatants to sustain their courage, and who, after three consecutive assaults, seeing them exhausted with fatigue, took up their arms and themselves repulsed the fourth assault, subsequently chasing off the soldiers of Boisjourdan from the gate of Deux-Moulins? Are there not in these episodes imperishable memories which awaken the noblest sentiments of our nature, and which the most remote posterity cannot hear of without respect and emotion?

Despairing of reducing La Rochelle by force, the Duke of Anjou, who had become King of Poland during the siege, only aspired to finish the struggle in some way that would save his dignity, and he consequently availed himself of the first opportunity to treat with his opponents. He granted them a most honorable capitulation, and, after having raised the siege, hastened to quit a country in which he had experienced only humiliations and reverses. Peace was signed on the 24th of

taken pity on the mental condition of his assailant, "*hominis dementiam miseratur.*" (Arcère, p. 477.)

[1] This name was given to a long pole, turning on a pivot, at the end of which was suspended a caldron filled with boiling oil and heated bitumen, which they emptied upon their assailants.

June, 1573, and, spite of all the ills they had suffered, the Rochelais had reason to rejoice and return thanks to God ; they had secured freedom of worship for themselves and their fellow-Protestants. Accordingly the magistrates ordained public thanksgivings to the Almighty for the protection He had granted to the most just of causes. Those who had, by fasting and prayer, humbled themselves before God from the beginning of this struggle, could not but return thanks to Him after victory.

CHAPTER III.

A GLANCE AT THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION UPON LA ROCHELLE.

Public Instruction. — The College. — Its Organization. — The Principal Professors. — Protestant Printers. — The Library. — Protestants celebrated for their Learning or Virtues.

THE hero of the siege through which La Rochelle had just passed was unquestionably François de la Noue, surnamed "the Huguenot Bayard," descended from an ancient and illustrious house in Brittany, but a Rochelais by adoption, in consequence of his zeal and devotion to the city. A distinguished writer as well as a skilful captain, he joined to bravery, under every trial, a moral integrity, an unselfishness, a loyalty, and a moderation, which raise him above most of his contemporaries. Those authors, whether Catholic or Protestant, who have mentioned him, agree in doing homage to his nobility of sentiment. His military and political speeches, written during his captivity in the Château of Limbourg, equal in conciseness, in force, and in common sense those of Xenophon, Polybius, or Cæsar. And when, in 1591, he died from wounds received at the siege of Lamballe, Henry IV., who had been better able than any one else to appreciate his talents and merits, delivered concerning him this most expressive of funeral orations, in these few words: "He was a great man of war, and a greater man of goodness."

I.

The peace signed July 10, 1573, was an ephemeral one. A sullen mistrust prevailed, and the war had only changed its name. The Queen-mother, having only acceded under protest to the capitulation with La Rochelle, cherished a secret resentment against the city, and sought to secure by strategy what she had failed to obtain by force. From such an enemy there was everything to be feared.

After the fruitless attempt of the renegade, Amateur Blandin, to turn over to the King of France his former sway in the city of La Rochelle, a more dangerous enterprise, paid for by Catherine herself, was undertaken by one Jacques du Lion, a bold, arrogant man, hostile to the city's liberties and privileges, who, in concert with other gentlemen, bribed a certain number of soldiers, and came near making himself master of the city. The plot was revealed by an anonymous letter, and the warmest adherents of peace now began to feel excited. La Noue himself, who had given so many proofs of his pacific and conciliatory disposition, now adopted a contrary view of the matter. The bad faith of the court, rendered apparent by the various attempts upon La Rochelle, had finally disabused that city of its dreams of a settlement. It knew now that the churches had neither peace nor truce to hope for from a prince who contemplated their extermination, without the least scruple as to a choice of his methods. The unhappy fate of Coligny, upon whom had been lavished demonstrations of kindness and affection while his destruction was being plotted, came back to its memory, and it saw

what it had to fear "from those who governed in the King's name, and who no longer distinguished between the caution of deceit and the dexterity of falsehood."[1]

After such an avowal, one finds it hard to understand how this historian could have blamed La Noue for having separated from those who were unceasingly conspiring against his country's civil and religious liberty. What else could he have done under such circumstances? Keep silent, and tacitly approve of the plots which were being hatched against his party and himself? A singular idea! What! was he to see the storm gathering on all sides about those he loved, and yet not be allowed to warn them of their peril, or to seek to rescue them from it? What! was he to be a daily witness of the machinations of the enemy to exterminate the Protestants, and must he become an accomplice by not exposing the plot? — must he deliver up his brethren to the homicidal plans of the Medici and her Italians? The bloody corpse of Coligny was present in his imaginings; and must he also allow himself to be led to the slaughter, or, rather, must he bend his neck to those who would consign him to the same fate? This would indeed be carrying the subject's duty to the sovereign too far; and had he yielded to such exactions, impartial history would not have failed to cry out, "Treachery!" it would have pitilessly condemned his want of foresight, or his cowardice.

But he was not a man of that kind. As soon as the path of honor was clear to this great citizen's conscience, he hesitated not to follow it. Resolved to break off with a court devoid of frankness and of loyalty, he re-

[1] Arcère, Book IV. p. 541.

turned to La Rochelle, accompanied by Lacaze, Mirambeau, Monguyon, and others, ostensibly to partake of the sacrament; and on the 23d of January, 1574, he appeared before the Consistory, where he vindicated his conduct during the siege, protesting that he was ready to die for the defence of the Church. After having thus conciliated the ministers, whose influence was considerable, he appeared before the General Assembly; and, by a speech at once eloquent and skilful, induced the Rochelais to join the malecontents. The Protestants of Aunis, Saintonge, Poitou, and Angoumois followed their example, and chose La Noue for their leader.

From that moment, this valiant captain devoted himself entirely to defending the interests confided to him. He began by repairing the walls of La Rochelle, which felt the effects of the injuries sustained during the recent siege, and which, in several places, particularly at the Gospel Bastion, presented only a heap of ruins. Then he put himself at the head of the confederated troops, and proceeded to direct military operations in Poitou. In vain did Saint-Sulpice bring him letters from Catherine de Medicis, proposing to negotiate peace: the warrior perceived the trap that was set for him, and opposed her advances. In vain did Madame de Bonneval, one of the most adroit and seductive women of the time, come to La Rochelle, and bring into play in his presence all the resources of that pleasantry which she had so well learned at the court of Charles IX. The brave captain knew how to guard himself against the seductions of coquetry, as well as the ruses of politics. Meanwhile, after the discovery of the La Mole conspiracy, revealed by the feeble and irresolute prince

who had been mistakenly placed at its head, the Rochelais, seeing the Duke of Alençon and the King of Navarre held captive, Marshals De Cossé and Montmorency thrown into the Bastile, and the Prince of Condé a fugitive in Germany, began to be afraid, and relapsed into a feeling of discouragement. La Noue, barely escaping death at the hands of the King's emissaries, hastened into their midst, and strove to dissipate their alarm. He aroused the courage of the more timid ones, and all, led on by his eloquence, bound themselves by oath to fight till their last breath for the common cause. For fear that food should fail them in case of siege, he made sure of the city's being provisioned, by fortifying Brouage and the Isle of Ré. He passed over thence to the Isle of Oleron, where he imposed a heavy tax upon the Catholic population, and formed the plan of equipping a fleet of considerable size. With such rapidity was the work carried on, that in less than five weeks seventy vessels of different dimensions were ready to put to sea; some to cruise along the coast, others to scour the seas from Calais to Gibraltar. Daring corsairs these, not slow to win renown and inspire with terror those familiar with their exploits.

Such was the brave La Noue in all the transactions and all the combats in which he was called to take part as leader of the Protestant League. Cautious and moderate in council, but intrepid in the moment of action and immovable in the hour of peril, he was neither an ambitious man nor an intriguer seeking his personal interests while seeming to serve the public good. He was a man of convictions, who fought to profess and to defend what he considered the truth. A chevalier with-

out fear or reproach, he always kept before him the Gospel maxim, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Busied with his country's interests, and the rights of an earthly sovereign, we find him scrupulous even to excess; he pleads their cause before a people ready to rise in rebellion; there is no concession that he is not disposed to make, to avoid the conflict. But on the other hand, when liberty of conscience and the rights of a heavenly Ruler are in question, he hesitates not to "obey God rather than men." Inflexible in the performance of duty, he is restrained by no human consideration, stopped by no sacrifice. And should any be tempted to suspect his fidelity to the occupant of the throne of France, let such a one recall the siege of Lamballe, and, with his hand on his heart, ask himself, "Would I have been more faithful, more devoted, than was that man?"

II.

The death of Charles IX., who expired May 30, 1574, consumed with remorse and anguish, caused but a moderate sensation throughout the kingdom, and did not modify the politics of the court, which was given over to the Guise influence. When Henry III. came back to France, after having secretly quitted his kingdom of Poland, his return brought no improvement in the condition of the Reformers. Fair treatment, a respect for engagements once entered into, would alone have sufficed to revive confidence on the part of the churches, and concord among the French. But naught was more removed from Catherine's heart than sincerity and fair-

dealing, and she proved the evil genius of Henry III. as she had been that of Charles IX. A policy without principle, a court without conscience, sought to lull the Protestants to sleep by fallacious promises, amusing themselves by issuing edicts in favor of the latter every time it seemed possible without compromising themselves, so that there was no venturing to count on anything; everything was kept in suspense.

Thus lived the French Protestants during the half-century separating the two sieges of La Rochelle; and those of our city were especially compelled to submit to this odious *régime*, obliged to be incessantly on their guard, dreading the snares of their enemies and the defection of their friends, efforts to bribe whom were constantly made, taking up and again laying down their arms according to the needs of the cause, until, driven to extremity, they close their gates, and rush anew to the defence of their ramparts. We shall recur to this siege, at once glorious and sad, which brought about the fall of the city and the loss of its privileges. But, in the first place, let us cast a glance at the religious, scientific, and literary movement taking place at La Rochelle, under the auspices of Protestantism.

III.

Since the year 1577, the Rochelais had felt the need of building a temple worthy of the Protestant metropolis of the West. This edifice, situated on the Place du Château, was constructed according to the plans of Philibert Delorme, the architect of the Tuileries; and the first stone was laid by Henry of Condé in 1577, but

the building was not finished until the month of August, 1603. The pastor, Luke Dumont, performed the act of dedication on the 7th of September following, in the midst of a congregation estimated at not less than four thousand persons. This handsome structure was subsequently confiscated by Louis XIII., was converted into a cathedral, and became a prey to the flames, communicated from a bonfire on the Place, on February 9, 1687.

However, the expenses of the siege of 1573 had involved the city's finances. Accordingly, when, in July, 1579, there was held at Montauban a general assembly of the Reformed churches, at which the King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, and Messieurs Turenne and Châtillon were present, the Rochelais sent thither Captain Louis Gargoulleau to explain to the assembly that they had been obliged to borrow forty thousand crowns to carry on that memorable siege, and to request that provision might be made by the churches for their reimbursement in that amount.

Two national synods, the eleventh and the eighteenth, met at La Rochelle during the period of which we are writing; the first in 1581, under the presidency of Pastor Odet de Nort. After considering means for repressing the worldly and disorderly habits, a tendency to which prevailed in certain of the churches, the assembly prohibited both ministers and laity from publishing any writing on the subject of religious controversies, or on political matters, without the express approval of the Conference of their jurisdiction. An indispensable step this, in a time when the responsibility of the faithful was so limited, and when war was always suspended over

their heads, — a fact which explains the condemnation passed by this same assembly upon "The History of France," by La Popelinière, published at La Rochelle. The other synod was held in 1607, and had for its moderator Michel Beraud, who had previously filled the same charge at Montauban and Montpellier. Although approved by the assembly, that article in the Confession of Faith which declared that the Pope was the Antichrist was not printed, at the instance of the Deputies General, and the King was satisfied with this half-way concession. Then it was ordered anew that small schools or colleges should be established in the provinces, with a view to instructing the young in the rudiments before sending them to the large academies, and certain precautions were pointed out for assuring the execution of pious legacies, which, by the chicanery of legal form, were often paid over to Catholic establishments. The twelve last sessions were devoted to a leading topic, the nomination of Deputies General, whose powers were to last for only a year. Up to that time, this had been done by political assemblies; royalty desired to impose upon the synods this measure, which was outside of their jurisdiction. The Synod of La Rochelle, after long opposition, finally sanctioned the list of Deputies previously made by a political assembly, viz. Messrs. Villarnoul and Mirande. It was the entrance on a fatal pathway. Political assemblies were forthwith abolished as useless, the synods were invited to remain in their stead, and Louis XIV., as a result, managed to nominate, alone and on his own personal authority, a deputy general, whom he appointed for life.

IV.

Once more masters of themselves, the Rochelais sought to secure the prevalence of rigid morals in the city. They endeavored to free themselves of the presence of women of ill-repute by applying to some of them the punishment known as *la gourbeille*, then fallen into disuse, and which consisted in plunging them several times into cold water. They punished the sale of playing-cards; they resumed a regular plan for succoring the indigent, and keeping them from turning vagrant. The police government of the city during the years which followed the siege of La Rochelle was actively carried on, though rough at times, and imbued with the errors of its age. It is related that, two men having been smothered in a well, the people, instead of suspecting the presence of deleterious gas there, thought that there must be a basilisk (a species of lizard), a fabulous animal, which killed by its glance, or some other sorcery; and they consequently lost no time in piling in the earth upon it. The laws of health, moreover, began to be established in the city. Cleanliness of streets was expressly recommended, and the sale of alimentary products was confined to the markets. Attention was given to means whereby a supply of drinkable water could be obtained in the principal quarters, and by such measures were arrested the spread of diseases which distressed the population. According to the custom of the period, the corporation regulations were revised, and new privileges were established.

Under the influence, too, of Protestant ascendancy in the city, printing experienced a remarkable development.

Several booksellers and printers carried on their business there, and were distinguished by the number and nature of their publications, as well as by their progress in the typographic art. Of this number were Bartholomew Berton, who edited Bernard Palissy's works (1557–1573), Pierre Davantes,[1] and, above all, the Haultins, whose trade-mark, afterwards adopted by Protestant assemblies, represents an angel, the emblem of the Christian religion, leaning upon a cross, the Gospel in hand, and trampling under foot Death and the yoke of sin. The publication of the Hebrew and Chaldaic Grammars of Peter Martin, the "Works and Days" of Hesiod, and the Commentaries of Sponde, presupposes an enlightened community, capable of understanding and appreciating such productions. The theses frequently sustained by theological students, and publicly discussed before the pastors, the examinations passed by the doctors and the masters in pharmacy before a numerous auditory, kept up, otherwise, a very active state of intellectual affairs, and a great interchange of ideas. This literary activity lasted till 1628. After that unfortunate date, though nothing was destroyed, all was changed and lessened.

It is also to the initiative taken by the Rochelais Protestants that may be dated back the foundation of the public library, established at the beginning of the seventeenth century, under the direction of the pastors, with the assistance of the laity. Thanks to the zeal of Esprinchard, Sieur du Plomb, and to the generosity of Duplessis-Mornay, the newly organized library had in

[1] See *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme*, II. 11–13; X. 185, 215, 436; XI. 248; XII. 252.

less than two years' time acquired some importance. On the 19th of January, 1606, the books were placed upon the shelves of the cases, in a room above the Hall of St. Yon, one of the temples of the Reformed Church. A legacy from Mathurin Cartier (1610) favored the growth of this precious collection. Subsequent events did not long permit the city to enjoy the advantage of this generous legacy; but the donor's liberality is none the less memorable, and the friends of literature should be grateful to him for it. This library, confiscated by Cardinal Richelieu, in 1628, after the surrender of the place, passed to its death in the premises of the Sorbonne, and was later blended with the Arsenal Library at Paris.

But Protestant principles naturally tend to develop all branches of science, and intellectual activity at this time was manifested by the progress made in public instruction. During the year 1565, the commune of La Rochelle had acquired possession of the greater part of the abandoned Franciscan convent, intending there to found a college, by the authority of Charles IX. The arms of Jeanne d'Albret, of Condé, and of Coligny, engraved over the principal gateway, side by side with the arms of France, of La Rochelle, and of Mayor Blandin, bear witness to the interest felt by the chiefs of the Protestant party in the cause of public instruction. Later, in 1571, the generosity of Jeanne d'Albret and the princes endowed the commune with three professors, supported at their expense, and chosen "from among the Protestants, the most learned in the kingdom, to be employed in the instruction of youth." A knowledge of the languages in which the Holy Scriptures were

originally written came to be considered an essential part of a good education, and instruction in Hebrew, Greek, and Theology was added to the college course at La Rochelle, as is still the practice in many universities. The Queen of Navarre, feeling an attachment for the professorships created by herself, called capable men to fill them. These were Pierre Lefèvre, Director of the College and Professor of High Latin, Nicolas de la Grouche, intrusted with the course in Greek, and François Béraud, with that in Hebrew. We learn from Merlin what were the text-books used by the various professors; viz. the eleventh book of the Odyssey, the *Axiocosius* of Plato, and *De Ecclesiæ Capite Christo Servatore nostro.*

But at all events, these pious enterprises having proved unable to realize all their promises, the Assembly of 1588 once more took up the plan of establishing a University at La Rochelle — that is, courses in Theology, Greek, and Hebrew, — and it appropriated the necessary funds for that purpose. In 1590, Henry IV. received and paid over his pious mother's legacy. The city, on its part, caused the college buildings to be enlarged and repaired, and renewed its appropriations, and instruction was there given under the joint direction of the Mayor and Consistory, with the aid of five pastors, whose co-operation proved extremely useful.

V.

It happened occasionally that the Protestant ecclesiastical authority found itself arrayed in opposition to the civil power. The Consistory exercised a sort of moral

sway among its dependents. Summoned to make known in court the confessions obtained in certain differences which it had been unable to settle, it refused these judicial requisitions, taking the ground, and not without reason, that such a proceeding would divest its conciliatory intervention of all credit, and claiming the right to hold confessions of this kind as secret as if they had never been made at all. The officers of the Presidial Court at La Rochelle admitted this pretension ; but the Paris Parliament gave orders to the contrary, and the Consistory could only free itself from these demands by obtaining a discontinuance of proceedings against the individuals. It was even obliged to defend its right of free intervention in matters purely ecclesiastical. For instance, two brothers named Brochard, one of whom was a Regent of the College, allowed themselves to dogmatize, and sustained, among other things, the innocence of polygamy. Being invited to examine and subscribe to the Confession of Faith and the Church Discipline, they refused to do so. The Consistory did not confine itself to administering to them ecclesiastical censure, but went further, and called upon the Mayor to drive them out of the city. They complained to the Presidial Court, which essayed to summon the members of the Consistory before it ; but the latter refused to recognize its authority, and even talked of summoning the magistrates before their own disciplinary tribunals. Finally the more prudent members of the two bodies hushed up the variance, and, by injunction from the Mayor, the two Brochards left the city.

VI.

Having escaped, as it were by a miracle, from the St. Bartholomew massacre, Jacques Merlin, whose father was chaplain to the house of Coligny, had been condemned from his childhood to the rigors of exile, had early received a good education in the Bible, and had studied at Geneva, Berne, Zurich, and Paris. Admitted as Master in Theology at Oxford in 1588, and called in the following year to La Rochelle, he was there ordained to the sacred ministry on the 8th of April, 1590, in the Temple of St. Yon, by Pastor De Nort, "known by the zeal and eloquence of his sermons, and who on this occasion surpassed himself." For more than thirty years Merlin filled with great zeal his charge in the church of La Rochelle, then one of the most important in France. His talents, and the purity and simplicity of his morals, won him great respect. Not only was he deputed by his own church to several provincial synods, but he was, besides, chosen in 1601 as representative of his province to the political Assembly of Sainte-Foy, and in 1609 to the national Synod of Saint-Maixent, which, by its votes, placed him in its president's chair. We have two of his journals, or diaries, containing interesting details of the history of his time.

Among the remarkable men who, at this period, reflected honor upon Rochelais Protestantism, as well by their learning as by the reputation they had gained in the republic of letters, Arcère mentions the lawyer Jean de la Haize, Doctors Olivier Poupard, Louis Launay, and Jean Coyttard de Thairé, the jurisconsult Jean Pierres, Jacques Esprinchard, the intrepid traveller and writer

Lefèvre, a distinguished man of learning, and, above all, François de la Noue, "a skilful commander, like Cæsar, and wise as he." In the pastorate may be cited Charles de Clermont, Richer, Jean de Lespine, J. B. Rotan, Chenevert, and others.[1]

On the 20th of October, 1587, Henry of Bourbon having met on the battle-field of Coutras the Catholic army commanded by Joyeuse, the engagement was about to begin, when Antoine de Chandieu, a minister of the Gospel, stepped forth from the ranks, and represented to the King of Navarre that he (the king) had brought trouble upon an honest family of La Rochelle, and that he ought to make reparation for this scandal to his army, and an humble confession of his fault to the Sovereign Judge, before whom he might, in an instant, appear. At this solemn warning, Henry, conscience-stricken, acknowledged his fault, and said to the lords who surrounded him, "One cannot humiliate himself too much in God's presence." Then he knelt down with his soldiers; Chandieu pronounced a prayer, and intoned the 118th Psalm; and the battle began. Joyeuse met his death in the combat, and his army was cut to pieces. We mention this fact as an evidence of the

[1] The following century furnished a harvest not less rich. Protestant La Rochelle numbers in fact among its ministers Magnen, Boysseul, Loumeau, Colomiez, "at once a great *savant* and a great preacher," Cercler de la Chapellière, "who distinguished himself as much by his virtues as by his gift of speech," and, last of all, Jacques Merlin and Philippe Vincent. Arcère mentions also Amos Barbot, twice elected Deputy from La Rochelle to the General Assemblies of Sainte-Foy and Saumur; David Dufos, one of the chiefs of the Corps de Ville in 1628; the historians Pierre Mervault and Abraham Tessereau, King's Secretary, Paul Colomiez, and the distinguished physicians, Elie Richard, Bouhereau, and Pierre Seignette.

fidelity of the pastors of this period, of their zeal in following up scandals, without regard to person, and of the power of the Gospel in awakening the consciences of sinners, without recourse to auricular confession.

Foreigners also admired the severity of morals which prevailed in La Rochelle. They were astonished that the Reformed ministers should pray for them, and for the conversion of the heathen they were about to visit, while the Catholic priests did nothing of the kind. They gave these ministers, as much as the Mayor, credit for the excellent conduct of the police government of the city, rough it is true at times, and stamped with a certain harshness, but rendered necessary by the needs of the time.

VII.

Should one wish to form an idea of the religious movement existing in the city, and the conquests of Protestantism during this brief period of peace and liberty, it is only necessary to refer to the registers of baptisms, marriages, and communicants of the Reformed Church of La Rochelle.[1] Here, in fact, is what one finds in those registers: —

From 1574 to 1581, sixteen hundred persons were received into God's Church at the Gargoulleau temple.

[1] The first of these registers (1563–66) contains sixteen hundred and fifty-nine baptisms performed in Gargoulleau Hall, and simply signed by the godfathers and the scribes of the Consistory. On January 21, 1573, René de Montalembert figures as the godfather of Marie Marreau, baptized in Gargoulleau Hall. On the 2d of January, 1575, appears André de Saint-Simon, Esquire, lord of said place, godfather of Marie de Corlieu, daughter of one of the peers of La Rochelle. Thus it was that two families which had made themselves a name in Catholicism counted Protestants among the number of their ancestors.

From 1583 to 1587, eighteen hundred persons were received into God's Church in this same Gargoulleau temple, notably Madame de Montauzier, on the 18th of May, 1586.

From 1587 to 1591, eleven hundred new memberships at the Saint-Michel and Sainte-Marguerite temples.

Received into God's Church at the Saint-Michel temple, —

In 1595	45	new	memberships.
In 1596	86	"	"
In 1597	98	"	"
In 1602	100	"	"
In 1612	144	"	"

On Sunday, March 9, 1603, was received, among others, into God's Church, by M. Le Cercler, in Saint-Yon Hall, at morning service, Martin Bartox, formerly a Doctor in Theology in Spain, Vicar-Provincial and Visitor of the Order of Sainte-Trinité, for the ransom of captives of the kingdom and crown of Aragon, and Prior of the principal convent of said order in the city of Valencia, who made a summary confession of our faith, with an abjuration of all the errors of Papacy.

In 1611, abjuration of Michel Durand, a Franciscan monk.

In 1612, that of the priest, Philippe Ogier.

From 1612 to 1616, one hundred and twenty-six persons were received into God's Church, among whom were Bertrand Guiral, former priest of Agen (January 24, 1613), and Annibal Nannin, a former Franciscan (June 13, 1613).

On August 7, 1616, was also received into God's

Church, by M. Le Blanc, a nobleman, Henri Marc du Gouffier, Marquis of Crèvecœur.

From 1616 to 1620, two hundred and fifty-five admissions into God's Church.[1]

Some years previous, on February 16, 1569, had been baptized, at the Saint-Michel temple, Benjamin, son of Francis de Coligny, Lord of Andelot, and Anne de Salm. *Godfather*, François de la Rochefoucauld; *Godmother*, Catherine de Parthenay, wife of Charles du Quelever, Viscount of Fou, Baron of Pons, and Lord of Soubise.

September 16, 1574, baptism, at St. Yon temple, of Josias, son of Jacques de Bertin, Lord of Bourdault, and of Marguerite Després. *Godfather*, François de la Noue; *Godmother*, Catherine de Parthenay.

February 14, 1577, baptism, at said temple, of Henriette, daughter of the High and Puissant René de Rohan and of Catherine de Parthenay. *Godfather*, The

[1] The movement we speak of included, sometimes, even unbelievers: the two following extracts from the baptismal registers, etc. of the Church of La Rochelle prove it: —

Abjuration of an Idolater.

"The said day (15th March, 1598) has been baptized one Michel, having been catechised and made his confession of faith before the church, saying that he was born in the land of the blacks, in the country of Ardre. The said Michel, aged 24 years, being a servant in the house of M. de Sourdon, in this city." — No. 327, folio 29.

Abjuration of a Mahometan.

"Tuesday, March 2, 1655, Mustapha, son of Caialé, a native of Arger, aged twenty years or thereabouts, after having renounced publicly the impieties of the impostor Mahomet, and embraced the Christian religion, with a solemn protestation of his willingness to live and die in the profession of the truth as taught in our churches, has been baptized, according to the order of the National Synods, by M. Flanc, who gave him the name of Pierre."

Signed, ESPIE, *Elder and Scribe of the Consistory.*

very High and very Puissant Prince of Condé; *Godmother*, Antoinette d'Aubeterre.

February 17, 1577, baptism by M. Dumont, at the St. Yon temple, of Aimée, daughter of the nobleman Joachin de Saint-Georges, Lord of Dirac, and of Louise du Fou. *Godfather*, The High and Puissant François du Fou, Lord of Vigant; *Godmother*, The very High and very Puissant Catherine de Parthenay, Lady of Rohan.

June 11, 1586, baptism, at the St. Yon temple, of Henri, son of Jacques Guiton, Mayor of the city, and of Mary Bodin. *Godfather*, The very High and very Puissant Henri de Bourbon, Prince of Condé; *Godmother*, Louise Gillier, Lady of Montauzier.

February 22, 1584, Alexander Dundas spoke publicly in the St. Yon temple.

October 20, 1608, marriage, by Pastor Merlin, of Constant d'Aubigné with Anne Marchant.

August 9, 1609, baptism, at the Château temple, of Theodore, son of Constant d'Aubigné and Anne Marchant. *Godfather*, Agrippa-Theodore d'Aubigné; *Godmother*, Jeanne Marchant. The child was born July 25, 1609.

Toward the end of the autumn of 1592, the Church of La Rochelle sustained a sensible loss, Pastor De Nort being then attacked with inflammation of the chest. He died in the month of March, 1593, "greatly regretted by all good people, in view of the fact that, being only fifty-two or fifty-three years of age, he might, in the course of nature, have served this church several years longer; — a man who, by his wisdom and good counsel, as well in adversity as in prosperity; by his zeal for the glory of God, having preferred to be disinherited by his father

rather than abandon the profession of the Gospel; by his skill and vivacity, young as he was, in applying the word of God, especially in regard to the remission of sins; and by the soundness of his morals, by his caution in speech, by his modesty and simplicity in all periods of his life, — was very useful and very necessary to this church, which he served for twenty-nine years. In the midst of domestic afflictions, having lost all his children, he displayed no sign of impatience, consoling them even to the door of the tomb: he allowed it to cause no interruption in his duties, even ascending into his pulpit on the day after their interment. He was not at all times able to escape the stings of calumniators, to which faithful ministers of the word of God are especially liable; but by the fear of God, by his prudence, by his hatred of vice, against which he spoke out with holy courage, he always succeeded in closing their mouths, and showed himself no less firm than in every other adversity."[1]

The following year, Pastor Guyneau died, at the age of twenty-seven years, with a firm trust in the promises of God. At the Provincial Synod of Saintonge, Aunis, and Angoumois, assembled, in 1597, at Sainte-Marguerite, M. Ragueneau, the pastor at Oleron, was prostrated, while in his seat, by a stroke of apoplexy, and expired a few hours afterwards. "There was a time," adds Merlin, "that, there being but few pastors in the city, and the sacrament having to be administered in three places, it was necessary to commence one of the administrations at four o'clock A. M., at Saint-Michel."

Among the numerous conversions effected at this period, all had not the same value; certain proselytes,

[1] Journal of Merlin.

poorly strengthened in the faith, abandoned, here or there, the profession of the truth. For instance, the Curé de Laugé, a man of learning, after embracing the Reformation, exposed himself to censure, which wounded him so that he disappeared, and was never after heard from. A Franciscan, who had been unfrocked, fell ill, and was placed in hospital, where he was enticed away by the Papists. Minister Merlin having gone to see him and console him, he repulsed him harshly, and died invoking Saint Nicholas, whom he addressed as "Monsieur Nicolas." Another Franciscan, aged over sixty, named Vice-Contes Cordat, calling himself a natural brother of the King of Spain, and a well-informed man, grew impatient of the trial to which he had been subjected before his reception into the church, and went back to Papacy, preaching, however, after the manner of the pastors. He had been put among the ranks of the circuit-preachers by a National Synod.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEAGUE.—HENRY IV.—THE EDICT OF NANTES. — RICHELIEU AND GUITON. — FALL OF THE LAST STRONGHOLD OF PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

1574–1628.

The Huguenots, by their Armed Resistance to the League, preserve French Nationality. — Henry of Navarre at the La Rochelle Assembly. — Henry IV., in order to obtain the Crown, embraces the Religion of his Subjects. — "*Paris is well worth one Mass.*" — The Edict of Nantes. — La Rochelle's Prosperity under the Reign of Henry IV. — Civil Wars rekindled by the Oppression of the Reformers of Béarn. — Political Assemblies at La Rochelle. — The Building of Fort Louis, in Spite of Treaties. — The Privileges of the Rochelais the Safeguard of their Faith. — Their Fidelity to the King in the Midst of their Seeming Rebellion. — Siege of La Rochelle. — The Mayor, Jean Guiton.

I.

IT must be admitted that the Edict of Beaulieu (1586), the most favorable the Protestants had been able to obtain at the hands of royal justice, had greatly irritated the Catholics, who, to defend their religion against the progress of the Reformation and the incapacity of Henry III., formed "the League," a strong combination, at the head of which was the Duke of Guise. Justly alarmed at the plans of this association, the Reformers held at La Rochelle a general assembly, intended to combat its influence. It was opened on the 14th of November, 1588, and the city was there represented by Louis Gargoulleau,

Mayor, Mathurin Renault, Alderman, and Jean de Bourdigalle, Lord of La Chabossière, Peer. The King of Navarre was present with the Viscount of Turenne, the Prince de la Trémouille, Duplessis-Mornay, and the other lords of the party. After renewing the oath of union made at Montauban in 1579, as much between the Reformed churches themselves as between them and their protector, the King of Navarre, the Assembly testified to its respect and deference toward the royal authority. Henry of Navarre answered in writing, and with great marks of piety, in response to the remonstrances addressed to him by the pastors and elders, in his capacity of Protector of Churches.[1] Regulations were also established for the administration of justice, for finances, the levy of soldiers, military discipline, and all objects of concern to the common cause. Finally, they created a Superior Council of twelve members, without whose consent the King of Navarre could undertake nothing. Before adjourning, the Deputies addressed a request to Henry III., asking that the edict of January might be again put in force.[2] It was moreover agreed upon, that, in order to create ministers, a university should be established at La Rochelle, supported by means of a previous levy of one thousand crowns which had been effected on the revenue of the Roman ecclesiastics, and that it should consist of a professor and a doctor in theology, as well as of several teachers of "the humanities." The first two were to receive eight hundred pounds a year, the others six hundred. Forty-six

[1] See Appendix, No. II.

[2] See *L'Histoire des Assemblées politiques des Réformés de France*, by Léonce Anquez, 1859, page 39; Appendix, pages 453, 454.

scholars were to be admitted by appointment of the Synods, Conferences, or Consistories. An annual pension of two hundred crowns was allowed to students in theology, and one of fifty to those in "the humanities."

But while at La Rochelle the Protestants deliberated on their public interests, the League did not lose sight of the aim it was seeking, and its States-General assembled at Blois. The Duke of Guise, who aspired to royalty, was there appointed Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. He had but one more step to take to reach the highest rank, when he was assassinated by order of Henry III. The news of this event, which freed the Reformers from one of their most dangerous enemies, was received with transports of joy by the people of La Rochelle. Some even wished to celebrate it by a salvo of artillery; but this outburst was arrested by Duplessis-Mornay, "in order that it might not be said that the Protestants approve by formal act of a deed doubtful at best." However guilty, indeed, might have been the Duke of Guise, Christian morals could not approve the means which Henry III. had taken to rid himself of his dangerous rival.

Soon after this catastrophe, this effeminate prince, prodigal and irresolute, who joined devoutness to licentiousness of morals, joined with Henry of Navarre to combat the League, and that formidable association came well-nigh being destroyed: then Henry III. was in his turn assassinated by Jacques Clement, on the 10th of August, 1589; — the horrible destiny of some men, or rather God's just judgment upon those who rebel against his laws! Henry III. had the chief of the Leaguers assassinated, and himself fell by the dagger of a fanatic,

a tool of Mayenne and the Duchess of Montpensier, who thus avenged the death of the chief of the League.

The King of Navarre was sincerely beloved by the Rochelais ; they gave him an unequivocal mark of their affection in the grief they expressed at news of the danger threatening his life, in consequence of an attack of pleurisy, resulting from the fatigues of war. This sad occurrence caused universal mourning ; people rushed in crowds to the temples ; tears and groans mingled with the chanting of the Psalms. And great was the joy when he was brought, during his convalescence, to La Rochelle. To grief succeeded the liveliest demonstrations of attachment and respect. Little did they think how soon these evidences of regard and sympathy were to be repaid by cruel desertion.

II.

Becoming legitimate heir to the throne of France by the death of Henry III., the King of Navarre encountered active opposition from the Catholics, on account of the religion he professed ; and he well understood that, although by changing his religion he could not render himself acceptable to the Leaguers, he could at all events remove one of the greatest obstacles in the way of his securing the crown. After much parleying and indirect manœuvring, which ought to have opened the eyes of the Protestants to the King's purposes, the man of Béarn,[1] to whom the battles of Arques and Ivry had just opened the road to the capital, decided to satisfy

[1] A term applied to Henry IV. as denoting his birthplace, or the town to which he belonged. — G. L. C.

the Catholics, and "take the perilous leap," as he himself expressed it in writing to Gabrielle d'Estrées. He made a semblance of being instructed in the dogmas of Catholicism, and on the 25th of July, 1589, performed his act of abjuration in the abbatial church of St. Denis, under the hands of the Bishop of Bourges, estimating that *Paris was well worth one mass.*

If this celebrated expression, attributed to Henry of Navarre, is not authentic, if he did not make the remark as bluntly as he is said to have done, it is none the less worthy of being received by the historian, and paints none the less faithfully the state of his mind, for he did in fact consummate the act of which the remark conveys the idea. Yes, the stake of his conversion to Catholicism was indeed Paris: he valued it so highly, that for it he sacrificed his convictions and religious sympathies. Certainly, had the abjuration of Henry IV. been sincere, we should be among the first to respect him; because, after all, every man should be consistent, and obey the promptings of his conscience. But this act lacked sincerity, and from this stand-point he could not look for honest people's respect. It lacked sincerity, for this prince had on several occasions protested his inviolable attachment to the doctrines of the Reformation, declaring that as long as he lived he would persist in the Protestant religion. But these convictions of his had been so little shaken by the instructions which he had had given him to extenuate his apostasy, that he himself said to persons charged to refute his objections, "You do not satisfy me, as I had desired and you had promised, with your instructions"; and so saying, adds L'Estoile, who was present during the conversation, "tears came from his eyes."

Thus this prince, whose memory his people have preserved, endowed with eminent traits and a chivalrous character, who since St. Bartholomew's day had passed his time in alternate dangers and debauches, feared not to act this unworthy comedy in order to prepare his way to the throne. On hearing of this cowardly retraction and this shameful apostasy, what must have been the grief of Jeanne d'Albret and of Coligny, especially the former, who one day wrote: "If I had my kingdom in one hand, and my son in the other, I would throw them both into the depths of the sea sooner than attend mass." Is it not humiliating, indeed, for a king of France to read in a loud voice the form of abjuration imposed by the Church, and to complain to the Presidents of Paris and Rouen, that it was intended to do violence to his conscience, "in constraining him to sign and to believe in trifles, which he was sure most of them did not believe, as for instance purgatory"? Evidently any one who talks in that way does not believe in purgatory. Well, while protesting, on the one hand, against this doctrine, Henry confesses, on the other, "that there is a purgatory, where the soul, being temporarily detained, can be comforted by the suffrages and good deeds of the faithful." Is it possible that weakness, or, I might say, duplicity, could be carried farther? And accordingly, from the time of his entry into the Roman Church, the conduct of the man of Béarn and his new spiritual guides is tarnished by tyranny and falsehood.

When the prince of darkness, having led the Saviour up into a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory thereof, and said, "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt cast thyself down and wor-

ship me," Christ answered, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But when the tempter said to Henry of Navarre, "I will give thee the kingdom of France, with the glory thereof, if, perjuring thyself, thou kneelest to idols," the proposal did not appear to displease him; he did not repel it with horror; he strove to shut his eyes to the odious nature of the bargain he was about to conclude, and sought to bring those who laughed at him over to his side by a trifling remark, "Paris is well worth one mass," — forgetting his Divine Master's words, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

After that, let people if they will bestow the title of "Great" upon a monarch who did not recoil from such an act of sacrilege; that is, looking at it from a political stand-point. But it is very different in a moral aspect. The abjuration of Henry IV., as transmitted to us by history, is a blot upon his memory, and the upright in heart will always hide their faces at the recollection of this detestable hypocrisy.[1]

However severe may appear this judgment, it does not exceed the bounds of justice; for Richelieu reports that Henry IV. had confessed to the Queen "that, when he first professed Catholicism, he only *outwardly* embraced the truth of the religion, in order to make sure, in fact, of a crown"; and to such an act one can give no other name than hypocrisy.

Far be it from us to depreciate the services rendered by this prince to finance, industry, and commerce. We

[1] See *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme*, V. 260–274, XII. 866.

cheerfully recognize the fact that the Edict of Nantes was a benefit to the Protestants. But all this cannot remove the blot of St. Denis,[1] and an impartial posterity will never forgive him the scandal put upon his own people by a questionable abjuration, having its origin, not in the depths of a Christian conscience, but in the calculations of a tortuous policy.

The consequences of the abjuration of Henry IV. have been greatly extolled. It has been claimed that they were fortunate for France, and especially for La Rochelle, since that act put an end to the war which was desolating the country. But is it quite certain that, in Henry's case, to abjure the Reformation was to terminate the civil war? Were this assertion even as true as it is open to question, the end would not justify the means, and this abjuration against conviction, this avowed hypocrisy, was a great scandal to the country. It was calculated to demoralize the nation, and inspire in it a contempt of all principle: it was certain to result disastrously in a moral point of view. If for the King of France, in fact, Paris is well worth one mass, why should not his subjects as well throw their religious scruples to the wind, and adopt this maxim in the service of their interests and their passions? Why should they not, in their turn, say, "A good marriage is well worth one mass"? "An honorable or lucrative employment is well worth one mass"? "Lands, châteaux, are well worth one mass"? And then what becomes of honor, uprightness, and rectitude in the service of God? Are not holy things given up as a prey to venal souls, and is not the sanctuary soon thrown open to every

[1] The church where the act of abjuration was performed. — G. L. C.

ambition and every knavery? Ah! who shall say that the counter-blow of this unhappy teaching is not felt even in our own age, when people value everything by the profit they gain from it?

Thus the abjuration of Henry IV. produced a profound sensation among the Reformers: to surprise succeeded, on the part of some, grief and sadness; of others, discouragement and indignation. The pastors did not conceal from the King the enormity of the fault he had committed, and addressed to him firm and respectful remarks on the subject. It was resolved that thenceforth no Christian prince should be honored with the title of "Protector of the Churches," in testimony of the grief they had felt at this change. The Rochelais in particular gave utterance to bold remonstrances, addressed to the apostate monarch, who had betrayed the hopes of fidelity given by him in writing to the Assembly of 1588.

We have purposely dwelt upon this incident, for the reason that Henry IV. was almost the child of La Rochelle. He had lived for a long time in this city: its inhabitants had given him reiterated marks of their affection; but a short time before, they had imposed upon themselves a sacrifice of twenty thousand crowns to help him in his extreme need; and if his desertion was felt by all Protestant people, it was especially felt by those of La Rochelle.

III.

Notwithstanding all the concessions which he had counted upon making, Henry had been unable to obtain

entire forgiveness for his Huguenot extraction. He had chilled the Protestants, and only half satisfied the Catholics. The general need of quiet had caused the conclusion of a three months' truce ; but a sullen mistrust prevailed, and the new monarch had trouble in establishing his authority. When he saw it growing stronger and wider day by day, it seemed to him that the moment had arrived to give it a hold by means of his coronation. The ceremony accordingly took place, with all the customary formalities, at Chartres, on the 27th of February, 1594; and it is noticeable that in this solemnity Henry did not refuse to take oath to exterminate the heretics denounced by the Church, as he had done at St. Denis, on the occasion of his abjuration. While the Huguenots were swearing fidelity to him, he was taking an oath to exterminate them. "De terra mea ac jurisdictione mihi subdita universos hereticos, ab Ecclesia denotatos, pro viribus bona fide exterminare studebo," — such are the terms in which this promise was made. What a road had he travelled since the oath at La Rochelle![1]

Since his accession to the throne, Henry IV. had conceived, in a manner more or less fair, the idea of having all religions live in peace. But the Reformers, witnessing the concessions and the complacency of the new sovereign toward the Catholic party, had felt lively anxiety in regard to the consequences which the royal tactics might entail for their religion and their personal safety; they accordingly held at St. Foy a political meeting, which gave the prince to understand the necessity of affording satisfaction to the genuine grievances

[1] See Haag, *France Protestante.*

of a portion of his subjects. He sent, then, the Edict of Tolerance, rendered at Mantes in 1591, to the Parliament of Paris, where it was registered with a very poor grace. But these guaranties, which were confined to a re-establishment of the edict of 1577, which the exactions of the Leaguers and the partiality of the tribunals had made a dead letter, were too incomplete to quiet the Protestants. Driven to extremities by the manœuvres and the persecutions of which they were the victims, they summarized their grievances in a voluminous note-book of complaints, discussed in various assemblies, and addressed directly to Henry IV. To put an end to these complaints, the King granted to his former co-religionists the celebrated ordinance known under the name of the "Edict of Nantes," because it was promulgated during Henry's sojourn in that city, in the month of April, 1598, after the submission of the last of the Leaguers.

Every one knows the provisions of this edict, which was declared perpetual and irrevocable: — full liberty of conscience; public exercise of the Reformed religion in all places where it had been established in 1597, and in the faubourgs of cities; permission to the Lord High Justices to hold services at their châteaux, and to gentlemen of the second rank to admit thirty persons to their private divine services; admission of Reformers to public trusts, of their children into the schools, of their sick into the hospitals, and of their poor to a share in the distribution of alms; right of having their books printed in certain cities; chambers to be divided half and half in some of the Parliaments; a court to decide in regard to the edict, at Paris; four academies for

scientific and theological instruction; authority to convoke synods according to the prescribed method; and, finally, a certain number of places of refuge. The Catholic Church had also its share in this edict. The goods of the clergy were to be everywhere restored to them, tithes paid, and the exercises of Catholicism established throughout the entire kingdom.

Scarcely was the Edict of Nantes published when the Papal Nuncio, the clergy, the Parliament, the University, the Sorbonne, gave utterance to unanimous objections, and brought to their support all the ill-will imaginable. Although the edict was a benefit to the Protestants, its application met with opposition at La Rochelle, because it restored Catholic public worship, which had been for some time past proscribed, and because the re-establishment of the former religion troubled the conscience of those who had seen its workings when it was in force in the city. On the 25th of July, the King's commissioners, Langlois and Parabère, arrived at La Rochelle, to put an end to the delay in the publication of the edict. They addressed themselves by turns to the Mayor and the Consistory, who were only willing to receive them on the following conditions, viz.: "that Catholic services should only be held in the church of St. Marguerite; that this re-establishment should extend no further than it had extended in 1585; that their ceremonies should have no glaring features, and should not be made a public spectacle, unless it was in the enclosure and out-buildings of this same church; that the Protestants should remain masters of the cemeteries, in which, however, Catholics might be buried; lastly, the former should not be held to an observance of the fêtes of the

Roman Church." After a painful negotiation, thanks to the good offices of Sully, who had come to La Rochelle to quiet the feeling, the Edict of Nantes was proclaimed in the city on the 4th of August, 1599; and on the 6th and 7th of the same month, the St. Marguerite and St. Barthélemy churches were turned over to the Bishop of Saintes, Nicolas Cornu de la Courbe, who on the following day celebrated mass at St. Barthélemy, while one of his vicars officiated in the other church.

It is astonishing, at first sight, that an edict so favorable to the Protestants should have been received with repugnance by the Rochelais; and some reproach them, not without a semblance of reason, for having accepted everything they could get, when they were the feebler of the two, and for having bargained their concessions when they were the stronger. Yet this accusation is hardly justified. When in fact men who had received neither lessons nor examples in tolerance from their Catholic brethren were not as advanced as we are in the matter of liberty of worship, there is nothing surprising in it. In any case, it was not due to a feeling of narrow-mindedness or intolerance, but to a legitimate apprehension that there was no immediate intention of carrying the Edict of Nantes into execution. They mistrusted the exclusive spirit of Catholicism, which made it everywhere the rule to oppress the Reformation, or hinder its manifestations. If the Protestants of La Rochelle wished to remain masters of the cemeteries, it was not in order to exclude the Catholics, since they specified that the latter might be buried there; but because they had reason to believe that the Catholics would exclude them, in case they held the ownership.

The condition that they laid down for the reception of the edict, viz. "that they should not be held to an observance of the fêtes of the Roman Church," shows whence their resistance sprung. They had no hostile intentions toward the Catholics, but they knew that the Roman Church claimed to constrain them to celebrate the festivals and ceremonies of its worship, and they feared, in conceding municipal rights, they might furnish arms against themselves.

"The ancient religion," says M. Edgard Quinet on this subject, "unchangeably resolved to extirpate everything which was not a part of itself; the new religion, summoned, in the name of its principle, to allow itself to be choked without resistance;—on the one hand, the offensive; on the other, resignation. Under these circumstances, the issue was plain, and the result could not long be held in abeyance. Had the new religion adopted the rule of sparing the former one, no doubt in a given time the one that had spared its adversary would have disappeared before the one that lost no opportunity to crush it. To reproach Protestantism with its intolerance, is to reproach it with having desired to live." It was not, then, an act of aggression, it was not even a reprisal, which drove the Rochelais to defer the publication of the Edict of Nantes; it was a measure of safety, an act of legitimate defence rendered necessary by the habitual intolerance of Catholicism.[1]

[1] There has recently appeared, in the *Recueil des Lectures de la Sorbonne*, a very interesting sketch by Professor Dunan, written in an excellent vein, on the re-establishment of mass at La Rochelle in 1599, according to the diary of Jacques Merlin. We recommend it to our readers.

IV.

After the publication of the edict, the two sects dwelt side by side, not without coldness and mistrust, yet without any open hostility. From the month of March, 1600, there were no more out-door processions, and the Catholics confined within their two churches the ceremonies of their worship. Quibbles on this subject, mutual accusations by the two clergies, superstitions, artifices, captious means to obtain conversions, proclamation of the sincerity of those who were converted, and of the interested motives of those who seceded, indeed, even, in the latter case, of Satan's intervention, are frequently met with in the writings of authors of this period. Sometimes these discussions disturbed even the public peace. The priests, who thought themselves oppressed since they could no longer be the oppressors, anticipated scandals in order loudly to deplore them, and made complaint at court. Other Catholics pretended to be excluded from public trusts, directly or indirectly. No official decisions were rendered on these complaints, but Rosny was intrusted with the duty of bringing the Rochelais magistrates back to a more impartial state of feeling.

These quarrels between the two sects assumed greater importance in 1606, when the Jesuit Seguiran came to La Rochelle to preach the Advent, announcing himself as a member of the Society of Jesus, and as backed by letters from the King. The sentries having refused him entrance to the city, telling him that they knew that Jesus had no companions and that he had no letters from the King, Seguiran went back to court, where he

made a great disturbance over this affront and this alleged contempt of his Majesty's orders. The Rochelais were right, however. The Jesuit had no letters from the King, not even secret instructions from him: those which he did have had been given him by two secretaries without the monarch's cognizance. Henry was wrong in not daring to deny them, and in hiding this intrigue. He feared that it would afford a pretext for resistance to the death, forgetting that justice is the best policy for those who govern. "He accordingly played very well the *rôle* of being offended, but he unbosomed himself completely to Rosny, by recommending him to keep up appearances." Upon the strength of a letter written by him, the Rochelais consented to receive the Jesuit to preach in Lent; but he was recalled after a few days, and disappeared without accomplishing his mission.

In the month of March, 1608, the Provincial Synod of Saintonge, Aunis, and Angoumois, of which Merlin was Moderator, assembled in St. Michel Hall. The diary of this minister, which contains numerous meteorological observations, reports in quite a curious manner an atmospheric phenomenon which occurred at this period. "In autumn," he says, "there was heard in the air, one fête day, a great noise as of a drum and armed men. There was seen to appear an army, well equipped and in battle array, of musketry, arquebusiers, lancers, and pikemen, who marched with drums and standards of blue and red, and who disappeared on encountering a forest." It was simply an aurora borealis, the theory of which science had not yet discovered, and which had wrought upon the pious and eminent pastor's imagination.

Henry IV. wished to have the compact which he had made with his former co-religionists carried out in good faith ; and the Rochelais, forgetting his faithlessness, began to enjoy the peace and liberty which the Edict of Nantes guaranteed them, when the dagger of Ravaillac came to strike the King full in the chest, on the 14th of May, 1610, under pretext that he proposed making war upon the Pope. The news of this sad occurrence, which reached the Mayor of La Rochelle on the 17th, spread consternation in people's minds. It was known that the prince was dangerously wounded, and the people went in crowds to the temples and churches to ask of God the preservation of the life of their well-beloved sovereign. But alas ! Henry had already drawn his last breath. At seven in the evening, a courier, sent by Parabère, the King's Lieutenant in Poitou, announced his Majesty's death.

V.

In this same year, the Rochelais had sent deputies to the political assembly convened at Gergeau,[1] which took wise and prudent measures. Protestants again lived in peace with Catholics, and an era of prosperity seemed to dawn upon La Rochelle. We have already observed that learning was in a flourishing condition

[1] These assemblies must not be confounded with the Synods. In the Synods, pastors and laity were equally divided, and usually attention was only given to church matters. In the political assemblies, the laity were in a large majority, and affairs of state were there discussed. There had been assemblies of this kind during the religious wars ; but it was at this time that they assumed a more regular organization, and adopted the resolution to meet periodically. (De Félice.)

there. Great intellectual activity prevailed in the city; a strong impetus was imparted to industry and commerce. Contemporaneous documents mention La Rochelle as "the French Amsterdam." In 1572, Professor Pierre Martines congratulated the Corps de Ville and the bourgeois upon the flourishing state of their city, at once learned and maritime; and one which, in this double point of view, perpetuated the glories of Athens, Rhodes, Alexandria, Syracuse, and Marseilles.

Had Henry IV. lived several years longer, hatred would perhaps have died out, and the Catholics would have learned to see in the Reformers only their fellow-citizens. But the assassination of this prince awakened divisions and mistrusts; terrible reverses awaited the Protestants after the tranquillity they had been for some years enjoying. Doubtless, they might at first have conceived some hopes; for, in taking the regency, Marie de Medicis hastened to confirm the Edict of Nantes, although it had already been declared "perpetual and irrevocable." She even caused to be transmitted to the Rochelais, by Villarnoul, the Huguenot deputy at court, an avowal of her favorable disposition toward the Protestants. A useless precaution: the Rochelais remembered Charles IX. and his mother, and had no faith in either the good will or the good faith of a Medici. The secret mission of Du Coudrai into their city was not calculated to reassure them. So they continued on their guard, and this suspected messenger was obliged to withdraw.[1]

[1] Du Coudrai, a Rochelais, counsellor to the Paris Parliament, received an order from court to proceed to La Rochelle, under pretext of settling some family affairs, but in reality to influence secretly certain well-mean-

However, Duke Henri de Rohan — son of René, Count of Rohan, and of Catherine de Parthenay, Lady of Soubise — came to La Rochelle about this time, and the political assembly, of which he was the chief mover, met in the month of November. The presidency was conferred upon him: he distinguished himself, on this occasion, as a statesman and a political orator. The assembly busied itself with making up a budget of the grievances of the Reformers, in order to transmit them to court, and adjourned in the midst of intrigues which were being plotted for its dissolution.

The year 1614 was marked by efforts on the part of the La Rochelle pastors to quiet a discussion which threatened to become a cause of irritation between the people and the Corps de Ville. The former complained of the traffic that was being made in the offices of peers.[1] After long and lively contests, it was ordered that, at the expiration of each term, the bourgeois should present three candidates, and that the nomination should be left to the municipal magistrates.

The Loudun conferences had been dragging along for three months, when the political assembly of Grenoble, which had been transferred to Nîmes, obtained authority from the King to proceed to La Rochelle, where it held its first session on the 3d of March, 1616.[2] But

ing people with a view to preventing the assembly about to convene in the city on the subject of the conflict between the Duke of Rohan and De la Roche-Beaucourt, Governor of St. Jean-d'Angely. The former wished to take away from the latter the command of that place, because he considered him too much attached to the Queen's interests.

[1] Equivalent to the office of assistant alderman in our day. — G. L. C.

[2] See *L'Histoire des Assemblées politiques des Réformés de France*, by L. Anquez, pages 257 and 293.

most of the Calvinists did not respond to this call. Lesdiguières, Châtillon, Sully, and Mornay held aloof. The Prince of Condé, Catholic as he was, had endeavored to turn to the advantage of his own cause the anxieties of the Protestant party, and made advances to the Rochelais to ask them to join him, invoking his father's and grandfather's memory. Some time afterward, he proceeded to La Rochelle, where he was received with all the honors due his birth; but soon he became reconciled with the court, and signed a treaty of peace, without troubling himself about his allies, or giving himself any anxiety about the embarrassment he caused them by his desertion.

While the La Rochelle Protestants were thus made victims to the promises of an ambitious and selfish man, an event of much greater importance, the oppression of the Reformation at Béarn transpired to rekindle religious warfare. The inhabitants of that province, three quarters of whom, and according to some nine tenths, were Huguenots, received an order to restore to the Catholic clergy the property which, since 1569, had been assigned to the support of Protestant worship. The representations addressed by the States of Béarn, and all classes of society, to the competent authorities, were ineffectual to obtain a revocation of the order emanating from the court, and Louis XIII., forgetting his promises made to the assembly of Loudun, put himself in motion, at the head of his army, to conquer the resistance of the Béarnais, marking his passage by acts of cruelty and violence which can only be compared to the dragonnades of Louis XIV.

VI.

At this sad news, great was the indignation of the Reformers in all parts of France. Some pacific voices were heard, but not listened to ; and the people, seconded by the gentlemen of the second rank, and by the bourgeois of La Rochelle, acting under a conviction that the cause of the Protestants of Béarn was that of all Huguenots, concluded that there was less peril in resistance than in quietly waiting their adversaries' death-blows.

It was resolved then to prepare for resistance, and to summon at La Rochelle a General Assembly, which opened its sessions on the 30th of December, in spite of the King's prohibition. In vain did the principal lords of the party offer themselves as mediators between the court and the Assembly ; in vain Duplessis-Mornay employed his forces and his credit in seconding their endeavors ; all was useless, the King's Council persisting in a command to the Assembly to disperse without delay, and the latter refusing to dissolve before obtaining redress for its grievances, with guaranties for the free exercise of their religion. There is no doubt that the court wished to profit by this occasion to crush the political organization of the Reformers ; but they perceived the danger threatening them, and defended themselves with all the more tenacity because they saw in this organization the safeguard of their religious independence.

Weary of addressing justifications and fruitless complaints to the court, the La Rochelle Assembly, on the 10th of May, 1621,[1] adopted, by a majority of six or

[1] See *L'Histoire des Assemblées politiques des Réformés de France*, by

seven votes, a resolution at once rash and to be regretted, which exceeded the rights accorded by the Edict of Nantes. It divided Protestant France into eight circuits, each of which was to be under the rule of a chief of the party, and of which the Duke of Bouillon was at the head. An unfortunate resolution this, and one which increased the irritation of the court, while it was never carried into effect. The Duke of Bouillon, in fact, desired to remain neutral; under pretext of his great age and his infirmities he held himself aloof: the other lords of the party feared to compromise themselves, and did the same thing. Rohan and Soubise alone took part in this rising. As to the provinces, they refused to follow them, with the exception of Saintonge, Quercy, Languedoc, and Guienne.

This Assembly had had a special seal engraved to be stamped upon its decisions. On this proof it has been accused of having wished to establish in France a second Holland, etc. But from the moment it is admitted that the war was just, — and, right or wrong, it had that appearance in the eyes of the Assembly, — it cannot be considered strange that this body provided its own organization, rules, and sign of recognition. This seal, moreover, was simply a religious emblem, such as may be seen on the first pages of religious books in use by the Reformers, with an "exergue" showing that arms had been taken up for Christ and the flock, *Pro Christo et grege.* But the first letter of the last word having been

L. Anquez, page 331, and Appendix, pages 513 and following; also the map indicating the places of refuge and the military departments created by the Assembly of La Rochelle in 1621.

badly stamped on the wax, the meaning was entirely different, and the phrase signified "for Christ and the King," *pro Christo et rege,* which led some people to believe that there were two seals.[1]

"As an interesting moral feature," says M. de Félice, "should be mentioned the rules adopted by the La Rochelle Assembly for the maintenance of religion and order in the armies. Pastors were daily to pray with and preach to the soldiers. Soldiers were forbidden to swear, under penalties proportioned to the grade of the delinquent; viz. one testoon for a private, one crown for a gentleman. Severer penalties were prescribed for those who brought women into the military camps. The continuance of husbandry and commercial pursuits was recommended. Prisoners were placed in custody of the Council. These rules proved that the La Rochelle Assembly desired to elevate the character of this new war; but it was only possible to execute them by a steadfast piety, which at that time had become very rare."[2]

However, the King's councillors were striving to bring back the Huguenots, either by fair means or by foul, into the lap of the Church, and Louis XIII., who had no sympathy for them, commenced hostilities on the 24th of April, fifteen days before the decision was adopted at La Rochelle; a fact which, it may be stated incidentally, may have had considerable influence upon the abrupt action which the Assembly has been accused of taking. The King first took possession of

[1] See Elie Benoit, *Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes.*

[2] See *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme,* IV. 470, and following.

Saumur, which the Reformers had neglected to put in a defensible condition, and he found no further resistance, until he came to St. Jean-d'Angely, which sustained a siege of twenty-six days. The little place called Clairac held out for twelve days, and Montauban for two months and a half, at the end of which the royal army was obliged to raise the siege. The war, temporarily suspended, was reopened in 1622, and carried on with unparalleled severity. The inhabitants of Négrepelisse were put to the sword by the royalists. The siege of Montpellier, in turn, ended with a treaty of peace, which, alas! proved nothing more than a dead letter.

VII.

Troubled in every way in the exercise of their religion, threatened every instant with the loss of the guaranties assured them by the Edict of Nantes, the Calvinists had finished by growing bitter toward the court, and losing all confidence. In 1623, the Provincial Synod of Saintonge, Aunis, and Angoumois vainly addressed to the King a memorial setting forth the infractions of the Edict of Nantes, of which the Reformers had been made victims. On its part, royalty, while declaring that it only wished to concern itself with the political privileges of the Calvinists, seemed in reality to have undertaken the task of menacing their religious existence. They had several times to subscribe to humiliating conditions, and to sign the peace that was imposed on them under the sole reservation of their liberty of worship. Numerous circumstances occurred to convince them that it was not considered binding to keep promises made to here-

tics. The peace of 1622 had been signed, and an order issued for the construction of a fort at the very gates of La Rochelle, notwithstanding the complaints of the inhabitants, and the reiterated assurance of respecting their privileges. Fort Louis, in fact, was no territorial defence: its only reason for existence was as a means of overawing the city. Several times promises had been made to level it; but they were only given to trifle with the Rochelais. At heart, it was intended to maintain it, and to use it, should need be, against the place. The city must swallow up the fort, or the fort the city, according to the prediction of Lesdiguières. It was the old story of Rome and Carthage, one of which had to perish in order that the other might live. Thus, the Rochelais, in their turn, did not cease declaring, although without result, "Delenda est Carthago."

Thenceforward occurred continual collisions, by land and sea, bringing no decisive result until 1627. Notwithstanding the bad faith practised against her, La Rochelle displayed a conciliatory spirit: she yielded even to the point of allowing the Catholics, whose worship had been proscribed anew, to resume within her walls their religious exercises. But, instead of being grateful for this concession, they seized the opportunity to excite troubles, and calumniate the Protestants before their sovereign. After having reduced them to a mere sect, the intention was to compel them to return into the bosom of the Roman Church, or go out of the kingdom. Cardinal Richelieu, who came into power, seemed to wish to respect the consciences of the Protestants; but the assemblies of the clergy only promised

their subsidies to the crown on the express condition of the early extermination of heretics. Satisfaction was accorded the Protestants on some minor points, while a formidable expedition was being fitted out against their last stronghold. Let appearances have been what they may, Richelieu's aim was to establish the King's authority upon the ruins of La Rochelle. So little was this a mystery, that, after the defeat of Soubise, in 1625, the Calvinists having demanded peace, the King replied that he was very willing to grant it; "but," he added, "as for La Rochelle, that's another affair." Louis XIII. caused to be announced to the Pope, and the priests published, the approaching triumph of the Catholic faith. "La Rochelle must be besieged, and the Huguenots chastised, or, better, exterminated, everything else being laid aside," wrote Richelieu to the Archbishop of Lyons.

Such was the situation at the moment when a cannon-shot, fired at La Rochelle from Fort Louis, gave the signal for the memorable siege of 1627, which riveted for more than a year the attention of all Europe. It does not enter into our plan to recount this heroic struggle, in which a few thousand inhabitants held in check for more than fifteen months the armies and fleets of Louis XIII. Let us confine ourselves to establishing the fact that it was solely for their faith that the Rochelais fought with such rare energy, personified in their Mayor, Jean Guiton. "The memory of the League," said Mr. L. E. Meyer, in 1854, at a meeting of the Literary Society, "was too recent for the Rochelais to have been able to attach any great confidence to the promises of the court. Should they have expected

to find protection from a queen who bore the name of Medici, and from a cardinal prime minister? In other respects, facts speak loudly enough: contrary to the faith of treaties, Fort Louis reared itself at their very gates, an incessant menace. Was it with peaceful intentions that work was carried on so actively for fortifying St. Martin, and that the garrisons of the adjacent cities were increased? If any doubt were still permitted them, if they did not as yet understand the Cardinal's projects, had they not before their eyes the fate of St. Jean-d'Angely, — the town government suppressed, the walls levelled, its privileges abolished? Yesterday, it was St. Jean-d'Angely's turn; to-morrow, it will be La Rochelle's. And when there shall be no more town government, nor walls, nor franchises, who will guarantee them the liberty of conscience for which they have poured out their blood? Their privileges are not only part of their fortune, they are, above all, the safeguard of their faith. And if Richelieu, for reasons of state, rather than by tolerance, abstained from religious persecutions for the reason that persecutions would have made internal war continual, and that he needed all the forces of the state to fight outside foes, are not the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the dragonnades proof that our forefathers' fears were well founded?"

The Rochelais have often been reproached with being insurgents against the royal authority, and the historians friendly to Catholicism seem to have mutually agreed to lavish upon them the epithet of "rebels."

Let us consider, however, for it is easy to exaggerate the extent of this reproach, and to lack justice toward those to whom it is applied.

Without doubt, resistance to the chief of the state is contrary to the Gospel maxim, "Let every one be submissive unto the higher powers." Without doubt, the Christian's arms are not carnal, and it is better for him to suffer martyrdom than to take up the sword, following the example of the Divine Master, who said to Peter, "Put up thy sword into its place," and who refused to call to his aid the legions of angels whom his Father would have sent him to combat his enemies. At all events, the sword has no jurisdiction over the conscience, and it is important to set apart the rights of God, according to that other Gospel maxim, "Render unto Cæsar those things which are Cæsar's, and unto God that which is God's." A reservation so legitimate, moreover, that Napoleon bowed before it, saying, on a memorable occasion: "The law's empire ends where the undefined empire of the conscience begins. If any one among those of my race," he adds, "arrives at the point of denying this grand principle, I agree to call him a Nero."

But even if revolt is forbidden by the law of the Lord, if there is more heroism in perishing at the stake than upon the battle-field, are there not in the present instance some considerations and circumstances which extenuate or which justify, to a certain extent, this accidental departure from the precepts of the Gospel?

Founded in 1199[1] by Aliénor, Duchess of Aquitaine,

[1] Mr. E. Jourdan published in 1863 the primitive statute of the town of Rochelle, according to a document taken from the archives of Bayonne. In the Memoir accompanying this publication, he, contrary to the received opinion and that to which Augustin Thierry had added his powerful authority, makes the foundation of the town date back to a period prior to 1199, possibly even to William X., father of Éléonore, Count of Poitiers: he asserts that it served as a model for the charter assigned to Rouen.

La Rochelle had received from that princess great political and commercial franchises. Its Bourgeoisie were self-governed ; they nominated a Corps de Ville, consisting of a Mayor, twenty-four Aldermen, and seventy-five Peers. These hundred magistrates, or "prud'hommes," filled by elections vacancies occurring in their own body ; they had troops, a navy, a separate treasury, and a very wide jurisdiction. When the city freely acknowledged Charles V., it received as a reward for its services a formal confirmation of its franchises and immunities. When Louis XI. made his entry there, on May 14, 1472, he made oath, kneeling, with one hand upon the cross and the other upon the Gospels, handed him by the Mayor, that he would preserve the city's privileges. "During the long period of the Middle Ages," says M. de Quatrefages, "the spirit animating La Rochelle continued always the same, and may be expressed in these words, — 'a boundless attachment to its privileges, an unalterable fidelity to the King guaranteeing them.'" These privileges, abolished by Francis I., had been restored by Henry II., so that these immunities and franchises existed of right, and the enjoyment of them might loyally be claimed.[1] "La Rochelle, attacked by land and sea," says an authoritative pen on this subject, "fought to vindicate respect for sworn faith, liberty of conscience, and the loyal performance of a contract, ratified by a long succession of kings, sanctioned by the authority of ages, and a just recompense for its ancient fidelity."

[1] A governor resided in the King's name at La Rochelle, but the Bourgeoisie did not allow him to keep much of a garrison, nor build any citadel. The real commander was the Mayor, who was chosen annually.

Moreover, La Rochelle was one of the "places of refuge" accorded to Protestants by the Edict of Nantes. They could there find refuge in good conscience, when they felt they were threatened in their religion: for if these "places of refuge" were not fortresses whither it was permissible for them to retire in the day of peril, what were they?

From which it results that La Rochelle's resistance in 1628 cannot be likened to that of a stronghold, or the chief town of a department which had revolted against the central authority, as many persons regard it. La Rochelle was rather annexed to than united with the state. Her position was analogous to that of the free cities of Germany. The immunities guaranteed by the kings of France, and her title as a place of refuge for Protestants, created for her an exceptional position, and her citizens might, without doing wrong, take advantage of it. Not only was it allowable for them not to consider themselves rebels, but many of them indeed might believe, in good faith, that they were discharging a duty in defending their privileges against the enemy.

"Our hands are armed," said the Rochelais, in the manifesto they published in 1627, to justify their alliance with England, "but our hearts are still faithful. Our crime, if any, is that of necessity. We still respect the King whom our enemies have incited against us. Our aim is not to change our master; we seek solely a protector.[1] Let none attribute to us the dark design of troubling France; we only seek to free ourselves from

[1] "Without in any way swerving from the fidelity and obedience they owed to the Very Christian King, their natural and sovereign lord," said the oath for carrying out the treaty of Plymouth. (Mervault.)

oppression. Know all men, finally, that we desire to live faithful and submissive subjects, and that, so soon as a reasonable peace is proposed, there will no more be any preparation for war in our midst."

Thus the Rochelais did not act after the principles of rebellion. They were rebels in fact, not in intention, — were such, I might say, in spite of themselves. Their aim was not to overturn the dynasty, nor change the form of government: they always protested their fidelity toward the prince, and we account this protestation sincere, — so sincere, in fact, that, had there reached the city, during the height of the struggle, letters-patent guaranteeing a free exercise of religion, and upon the performance of which they could have counted, we cannot doubt that the besieged would have instantly laid down their arms, and opened their gates to the King of France.

That which proves incontestably the truth of this assertion is, that during the entire siege the *Fleurs de Lis* were respectfully guarded on the city gates, and that daily, even when famine raged with the greatest severity, prayer was offered for the King's life. General consternation prevailed when it was learned that a cannon-ball, fired from the St. Bartholomew church-tower, had covered the garments of Louis XIII. with dust; and a *Te Deum* was sung in all the temples to return thanks to God that the King had not been touched. "A people faithful even in its rebellion!" says M. Callot. "After having refused to be annexed to the kingdom of England, guarding with respect the *Fleurs de Lis*, and daily praying the Eternal to preserve the King's life through all dangers! What a noble and touching result

of those religious opinions for which they died! What a sublime union of courage, fidelity, and resignation!" "Sublime, indeed!" exclaim Messrs. Haag in *La France Protestante*, "and still more so for the reason that at the same time Louis XIII. was giving an order to drive back with musketry to the city gates the famished wretches who wandered in numbers through the vineyards in the environs of the town, gathering a few herbs or sour grapes."

The most culpable parties in this affair are not those whom some are pleased to term revolters or rebels. They are those who drove our forefathers to rebellion by revolting acts,—those who harassed them, oppressed them, tortured them with a refinement and a satanic persistency, and who, after having pushed them to extremities, after having made resistance for them a fatal necessity, sought to bring them into reproach by flinging at them the epithet of rebels.

Who, in fact, are these historians who are scandalized beyond measure by the resistance of the Rochelais in 1628? Are they men of principle, who have a horror of rebellion, and stigmatize it wherever they encounter it? No; they are partisans, who grow indignant at revolt when manifested in Protestant interests, and who keep silence when it is exerted in Catholic interests. They treat the Rochelais, in their uprising against the greatest of tyrannies, with extreme severity; yet they have no word to say against the League or Papal excommunication. Is it on the ground that the League, indeed, which labored to remove the lawful sovereign from the throne to put in his place ambitious men with no other title than their fanaticism, did not constitute a criminal

resistance? Is it on the ground that the Popes in excommunicating the sovereigns of various countries, and releasing their subjects from the oath of fidelity, do not commit the most audacious of rebellions? Does not this claim of the Bishop of Rome contain the germ of every insurrection and trouble it is possible to let loose upon the state? Why do the historians who are hostile to the Reformation take these great rebels under their protection, or cover them with their indulgence?

So that it is scarcely worth while to be much excited over this factious indignation displayed by certain Catholic authors against the unfortunate inhabitants of La Rochelle. It is only under their pens a *ruse de guerre*, which may easily be turned back upon those who use it; for if the Protestants, reduced to extremities, freed themselves once from that submission which the Gospel recommends toward those who govern, the Catholics have not refrained from doing as much, if not more, without even the excuse of being under an intolerable mode of government; and because, moreover, there is always less wrong in throwing off the yoke of authority in order to find relief from unjust oppression, than in raising the standard of revolt in order to become the oppressor, and afford one's self the pleasure of doing violence to those who permit themselves to differ with us in opinion.

VIII.

Richelieu, having staked his political fortunes on the capture of La Rochelle, made his preparations with a liberal hand. He hoped, by there crushing the Huguenot party, to humble its nobility, and leave but a

single power, royalty, standing in France. To carry this enterprise through to a successful conclusion, he employed all the resources of his engineering skill, and put all the forces of the crown in action. But the remembrance of the valiant defence made by the Rochelais in 1573, and, above all, the shameful check that Louis XIII. had recently met with before Montauban, made him fear a new disgrace for this monarch, should an actual assault be made upon the place. Means less brilliant, but surer, were accordingly taken: it was resolved to reduce it, not by cannon and sapping, but by famine. In consequence, it was sought to close the port by means of a strong dike, defended by two forts and a large artillery force, and the city was enclosed on the land side by wide and deep lines of circumvallation, protected against the sallies of the besieged by seventeen forts, and a greater number of armed redoubts.

Pierre Mervault, son of the chief of artillery of the garrison, has left a journal of what transpired in La Rochelle during this memorable siege, to which we refer persons fond of technical details. Although it does not enter into our plan to study the political and strategic combinations by which the city was subdued, some readers may be interested by the circumstances therein reported, and we borrow them from the modern historian who has best related this dramatic episode of our city's annals.

"In 1625, Buckingham had lent some ships to be used against La Rochelle. In 1627, behold him its defender, the protector of La Rochelle and all our Protestants. He drew his sword in God's name. In reality, he desired to capture the city, or at least the Isle of Ré. It would have been a new Calais

between Nantes and Bordeaux, five hours distant from Spain. His dream was to re-establish, in the interest of Edward III., the ancient empire of Aquitaine, and he thought, by the aid of three fleets and three armies, thirty thousand men, to attack France in the centre at La Rochelle, and on the flanks at Bordeaux and in Normandy.

"Of all this wonderful war poem, but one episode was enacted, — the descent of ten thousand English upon the Isle of Ré. It was a sufficient force to have captured La Rochelle, had La Rochelle desired to be captured. But she did not. The Huguenots had been so much reproached with their love for England that the latter was sure of being received with open arms. But no. The Huguenots were, above all else, Frenchmen. Moreover, what would La Rochelle, our Amsterdam, brave in commerce and war, a little complete and original world in herself, with her own flag renowned in every sea, — what would have become of her in the hands of the English? Buckingham's bad faith was well known. Had he wished to rescue La Rochelle, he would have made his descent on the main-land, and would have helped the city to capture and demolish its great adversary, Fort Louis. But, instead, he remained at sea, to capture the Isle of Ré, where he established his head-quarters, whether the Rochelais liked it or not, right before them, at their very door. Made captive by France on the one hand, on the other they would have met with a similar fate at the hands of England.

"He (Buckingham) listened in no wise to the advice of Soubise, who had accompanied him, and while the latter had gone to La Rochelle, against their agreement, he landed on the Isle of Ré, — not, however, without loss. The Governor, Thoiras, with the regiment of Champagne and a force of noblemen, gave him such a welcome on arrival, and so crippled him, that he remained inactive for five days, repairing his damages, instead of marching straight against the fort.

"Soubise, desiring to enter La Rochelle with an English secretary, was peremptorily arrested, and would not have entered had not his aged mother, a woman of old-fashioned

energy, come and helped him to pass. People listened to the Englishman, but remained very indifferent. The tardiness of Buckingham gave Richelieu time to collect money for building vessels. The clergy furnished some millions. The Englishman guarded the sea poorly, and the fort was revictualled for two months when he came to besiege it. Fortunately, as the King, who was coming, fell ill, his brother took his place, with the fixed purpose to do nothing. The army he commanded, by pillaging, ravaging, and cutting down trees, did everything that was necessary to make the city surrender to the English. Besides Fort Louis, others were begun, evidently with the intention of besieging.

"Divided counsels prevailed in the city. The judges were for the King, under any and all circumstances; they left, passing over to the royal camp. The ministers and the Corps de Ville adopted the daring resolution to defend themselves; but alone, and without receiving Buckingham.

"On the contrary, in their manifesto, they recalled, as their greatest title to honor, the fact that they had formerly driven off the English. They offered, if the King would turn over Fort Louis into the hands of La Trémouille, or La Force, to unite with him in driving their mistrusted defender from Ré.

"As a reply, cannon were mounted before their gates. They must open them, or fight (September 10). They fought; but it was only five weeks later (October 15) that they decided to treat with Buckingham. Twenty-nine barks passed under the fire of the English, and the fort received from Thoiras provisions in abundance. From that time, the prospect was that Buckingham would pass the winter before the Rochelais fort. He signed what they wished. He who made this arrangement, Guiton, one of their great sailors, reserved thereby not only the liberties of the city, but the rights of the province even, stipulating that, in case the Englishman took the Isle of Ré, he should not separate it from the country to make it English territory; and that he would not avail himself of any forts built during eight years past on the coast, but would demolish them. An admirable treaty, founded upon an obstinate patriotism, but one

which must have completely chilled the English, and made them little desirous of conquering, since in advance it was exacted that they should gain nothing by victory.

"The King, finally restored to health, arrived on the 12th of October. All the military forces the kingdom could command were before La Rochelle: thirty thousand picked men, and an immense war material. All our ports, from Havre to Bayonne, had furnished men and small craft. Richelieu, in three months, by a strenuous effort of will and activity, had precipitated the whole of France upon this single point. His success was scarcely a matter of doubt. La Rochelle held twenty-eight thousand souls, of whom fourteen thousand were males; then, at most, seven thousand armed men. Of Buckingham's ten thousand, but four thousand remained. Neither England nor Holland moved. Spain alone had some disposition to use her ships, promised to Richelieu, to destroy his barks, and save La Rochelle. That was Spinola's advice: he plainly counselled treachery. Madrid was not greatly averse to it. But to practise treachery in behalf of heretics, to fight in Protestant ranks, would have been for Spain a solemn disavowal of the part she had been acting for a hundred years, — a most cynical confession of her perfidious hypocrisy.

"Had Buckingham carefully guarded the sea, France being short of vessels, he might have been still master of the situation. But the fortunate blunder of putting six thousand picked men on shipboard was committed. They passed, and he was lost.

"Ruined in France, ruined in England. On the 6th of November, before embarking, he played his last card, making a desperate assault upon the fort.[1] He lost many men by this

[1] "They were finally compelled, after two hours and upwards of fighting, to retire with the loss of many men killed on the ground. Among the French there were killed Cadets d'Artiganoüe, Deslandes, etc. The company of Savignac was very badly handled. . . . Among the wounded were Pluviau, Cadet Du Breüil and De Guire, who led the *enfants perdus*. There were also wounded Captain Bazan, . . . Meschinet in the arm, the Elder Artiganoüe in the thigh, but without fracture, and some others,

attack, and more still in his embarkation. He had not provided for anything. He was obliged to make his remaining troops pass along a narrow embankment, which was cut when half his men were across, and two thousand of them were killed (November 17, 1627).

"He had but two thousand left; but his fleet was still intact, and he was still master of the sea. The Rochelais implored him to remain there. The more men there were on the island, the quicker they would be starved. The King might have seen from the main-land his best troops forced to deliver themselves up, to surrender at discretion. But Buckingham had lost his head.[1] He went away after having eaten the provisions of La Rochelle, after having rendered the besiegers the service of starving it. This unhappy city, abandoned by him who had compromised it, was now confronted by a monarchy. Six thousand men, without help and almost without provisions, undertook to defend themselves for a year more against a great army, with all the kingdom behind it to draw upon indefinitely, and able to repair its losses at pleasure.

"France employed enormous sums of money in 1627 to destroy her own chief stronghold, the terror of Spain and the envy of Holland. Millions were thrown away in constructing immense works which could only serve a temporary purpose. Some of these forts, built solely to capture the city, were as extensive as the city itself. They were united together by a prodigious system of circumvallation, of three or four leagues in extent, which encircled the country. A monster La Rochelle had been built to smother the smaller one; and for one year's use, Babylonian walls and towers of Nineveh.

"But all this went for naught, unless communication by sea

names unknown, who were carried next day to La Rochelle to have their wounds treated and dressed." (Mervault.)

[1] Thus embarked and departed from the said Isle of Ré the Duke of Buckingham, after having remained there, from the time of his arrival to that of his departure, three months and sixteen days, consumed a portion of the provisions of the Rochelais, and driven to despair the party in whose behalf he had come to France. (Mervault.)

was shut off. It had been vainly attempted in 1622. A famous Italian had failed of success in undertaking it. The French architect, Métézeau, and a Paris stone-mason named Tiriot, pointed out the proper means for effecting it, and so simply that it was believed possible to accomplish it without them. They were paid and sent away. M. de Marillac, a suspected courtier, the great friend of Bérulle,[1] undertook the construction of the dike. . . . Marillac, substituting his own engineering plans for those of the original projectors, did not make the dike slope as they had designed it: he made it perpendicular; so that the work was swept away at the end of three months. But Richelieu's powerful will overcame all covert designs by the aid of money. The whole army desired to work on the dike. Each soldier was paid for every basketful of stones he brought. The soldiers' pay was also in other ways largely increased. Bounties and good warm clothing were distributed, with provisions in abundance. Money no longer passed through the untrustworthy hands of captains, but, by sure agents, went direct from the cash-box to the soldier.

"One would have wagered a hundred to one that Richelieu could not carry his point. Even as late as October 9th he was counting upon the Spanish fleet; but he learned in November, through some of Buckingham's papers, and some found upon an English agent captured in Lorraine, that Spain was against him, — that for a year past she had been organizing a coalition to invade France. Discovered and plainly exposed, Spain persisted in a ridiculous hypocrisy, sending us here at La Rochelle her fleet (for which we thanked her), while she was besieging our people in Casal, where we were supporting a Frenchman, Nevers, the heir to Mantua (December 27, 1627). Italy was appealing to France, which was tied up at La Rochelle. Germany and the North were appealing to her. What could Richelieu do? Nothing at all. If he abandoned the siege, his credit was gone, and he was lost. He must stay there, and all the millions of France, so much needed elsewhere, must be thrown

[1] It was Père Bérulle who persuaded Cardinal Richelieu to besiege La Rochelle. (*Hist de Paris*, vol. iv. p. 10.)

as rubbish into the mud of the harbor. Those Rochelais sailors, who might be useful against the Spaniards, he was compelled to allow to die of hunger. . . . In February, the King abruptly left him. He grew weary and returned to Paris. An understood arrangement, very probably. It was supposed that Richelieu would follow, or that, should the King set out alone, he would rid himself of his minister. . . . After passing fifteen days at Paris (Fontaine-Mareuil), *the King had forgotten* both La Rochelle and Richelieu. . . . This great man, so badly supported, had remained there, indomitable, on that dreary coast, with a daily possibility of learning of his own ruin, whether by a tempest sweeping away his dike and delivering the city, or by some capricious breeze from court upon the feeble spirit of the King, who now alone sustained him against the universal hatred.

"None, in fact, helped Richelieu, save La Rochelle herself. Witness the intractable severity with which she opposed the English, and which prevented the latter from revictualling the city. (F. Mareuil.) Witness the refusal of the Rochelais, even while asking assistance, to throw open their gates. 'What have you to offer?' said Buckingham; 'what indemnity for our expense?' 'We offer only our hearts,' stubbornly replied these heroes. This immortal resistance is vouched for by a Catholic, by an Oratorian, Arcère, who had possession of all the manuscripts since destroyed or scattered.

"Who would not mourn at seeing France thus annihilate that which was best in her? The incipient republic was maintaining itself against two kings. Its sailors passed through the dike, its cavaliers were defying the royal army. Twenty-eight bourgeois citizens of La Rochelle one day attacked fifty gentlemen. At the head of the twenty-eight was the weaver, La Forêt, who was killed, and for whom a triumphal funeral ceremony was held. Another man went out alone from the gates to offer a challenge to single combat. It was accepted by La Meilleraie, Richelieu's cousin, who had his horse killed under him, and was himself wounded; but some one came to his assistance.

"At Easter (1628),[1] the maritime element in the city carried the day against the bourgeois, properly so called; the violent party ruled, and the mayoralty became a dictatorship. Captain Guiton was elected in spite of himself. 'You know not what you do in choosing me,' said he. 'Understand me well, that with me there is no talk of surrender; whoever breathes a word of it I kill him.' He laid his dagger on the table of the City Hall, and left it there permanently.[2]

"Guiton was short of stature; but I was charmed to see a man so grand in courage. He lived in magnificent style, and his residence was full of flags, which he was fond of pointing out, telling when he had captured them, from what kings, and on what seas.[3]

"A Guiton was needed to sustain the city against the horrible blow it experienced, in beholding the English, so long waited for, at length appear and disappear without making any effort in its behalf. Denbigh, Buckingham's brother-in-law, being urged by the refugees who were with him to force the passage of the dike (it being still unfinished), replied that he left that honor to them, — that his orders were merely to cruise about,

[1] "On April 8, 1628, a young man named Vivier, a servant of Pastor Philippe Vincent, one of the deputies to England, arrived in the city, sent from Holland, whither, according to orders, he had passed in order to procure some comfort in the way of provisions and munitions for the Rochelais. He had been eight days in the royal army before being able to pass into the city. He gave information of an intended attack to be made the next night, while a dozen fire-balls were to kindle conflagrations in different quarters of the place. Thanks to this information, the inhabitants were prepared, and enabled to foil the design of their assailants." (Mervault.)

[2] The story of the dagger, attested by several authors, and disputed by Arcère, is too much like the known character of Guiton to be considered fabulous, above all by us Rochelais, who still possess the table that time and popular respect have consecrated as unquestionable evidence of an engagement so solemn. This table, preserved at the Hôtel de Ville, bears upon its white marble surface an imprint attributed to Guiton's dagger. The origin of this mark, latterly deepened by awkward or ignorant hands, merits greater credence than seems to be generally accorded it.

[3] *Mémoires de Pontis.*

and facilitate the entrance of assistance; but at the same time to take good care of his fleet.

"In such an extremity of despair, the fanaticism of a dying country drove a man to dedicate himself to the killing of Richelieu. He only wished to be assured 'that it was no sin.' Guiton, to whom he applied, answered coldly, 'It is not customary to advise in this sort of affair.' The ministers, to whom he also went, forbade him to do this act, saying, 'If God saves us, it will not be by means of a heinous crime.' [1]

"The famine had become pressing: the people had eaten everything, even down to leather, which they boiled.[2] A cat sold for forty-five livres. A barbarous thing, deferred as long as possible, had finally to be done; viz. to drive out the poor, the aged, the infirm, and the women who were widows, or without support, and send them over to the besiegers, that is to say, to their death: whoever passed the lines was lost. This unfortunate crowd, on presenting themselves, were received with gunshots. They returned imploringly to La Rochelle, and found there visages of stone, and gates inexorably closed and gloomy. They must die of hunger between the two. What a strange thing, that a French army should have been thus employed, not in fighting, but in the capacity of an executioner, slowly to strangle a city, 'though otherwise orderly, well governed, and quiet.' Richelieu said with pride, 'It was like a convent.' The soldiers waxed fat. . . . Prelates and officers alike went to re-

[1] Arcère, II. 295.

[2] "One saw on the streets," says Arcère, "nothing but semblances of dying people, who seemed to defend against death the remains of a body shrivelled by the severest diet. Motives of liberty and religion, those powerful motives which afford so much strength to the soul, enabled them still to rely upon their courage for that which their bodily strength refused; in feeble and expiring voice, they exhorted their rulers to continue the defence, and their last sigh was for their country's safety. The city was soon nothing but a gloomy habitation, where desolation reigned. Entire families perished at once, and their houses served as their tombs, for there were none to carry them out; the living were only wan and emaciated spectres, animated by a breath which they owed only to the tardiness of death."

ceive their instructions in a little dwelling where Richelieu lodged on the sea-shore. It was, in fact, the real court.[1]

"In the midst of the horrible scenes we have recalled, Guiton invariably displayed to his fellow-citizens a countenance that was placid, almost gay. The internal affairs of the city, its defence, negotiations with the English and the King, — he kept them all going. By day, he presided in council, visited the sick, and consoled the dying; by night, he made the rounds, and in person commanded the patrols. Some citizens, crazed by their sufferings, and knowing that it was he alone who prolonged this desperate resistance, wished on several occasions to strike him down with their daggers, and essayed to burn his dwelling.[2] Guiton, without pity for spies and traitors, did no more than imprison those who laid the blame upon him alone, and at the same time redoubled his efforts and his constancy.[3]

"However, the English Parliament had finally aroused itself, and voted a powerful subsidy to save La Rochelle. Buckingham, with a slowness that was disheartening, made preparations to put to sea with his fleet. His countrymen accused him of treachery. One of them assassinated him.[4]

"Then a new delay occurred. This third fleet did not set out until September, too late to deliver the city; soon enough, however, to see it perish.[5]

[1] Michelet.

[2] It has been believed, for quite a long time, that Guiton's house was situated in the Rue Pas-du-Minage, the second one from the Rue Gargoulleau, and forming the southern angle of the alley-way Tout-y-Fault. But M. Callot has demonstrated, by authentic documents, that the house is the second one on the Rue des Merciers, seventeen feet from the Rue de la Grille, with an egress into the alley-way Des Gémeaux, once the lane of St. Yon.

[3] De Quatrefages.

[4] "Not only was Buckingham suspected of having betrayed the Reformed communion, but, furthermore, Charles I. was also suspected of having had a hand in these disloyal manœuvrings, under the influence of his wife, Henrietta of France. The English Puritans had not forgotten this grievance, when they settled the account of this unfortunate prince's acts in 1649." (De Félice.)

[5] On the first occasion, the English army only served to consume a

"Richelieu had made offers upon offers to the besieged, even so far as to propose that the King should enter with but two hundred men, merely to say that he had entered. For form's sake, they would simply have had to pull down the exterior angle of one bastion. But matters had reached that point where surrender was no longer possible. The magistrate who would have signed the act would have been killed as a traitor. They dragged their bodies along, no longer bore their arms, and could only walk by the aid of sticks. Sentinels were found in the morning dead with hunger at their posts. And with all this Guiton said: 'It will soon be our turn. So long as one live man remains to close the gate, it suffices.'

"On the 28th of September, before this dead city appeared eighty English ships, several of them very powerful ones. The French had but forty-five small vessels, defended, however, by all the batteries on shore.

"It was a grand spectacle: every man at his post, the Cardinal on the dike, the King everywhere. Ladies in coaches watched from the bluffs. The English who had been sent ahead, lead-line in hand, soon came to a halt, finding little depth of water. The larger vessels could not come up, they said, and the smaller ones would be of no use. The French refugees who were on board the English fleet then asked to be permitted to take in the fire-boats, — to go and fasten them with their own hands to the stockade. They could discern from sea the poor people of La Rochelle, who had bravely opened the little inner gateway, and who, on their own part, in spite of the tide and wind, were driving a fire-ship upon the dike. The Englishman did not grant our French the honor they asked. He drove his fire-boats himself, very poorly, and crosswise. Everything shamefully miscarried.

part of La Rochelle's provisions; on the second, to drive its people to despair; and on the third, to leave fifteen or sixteen thousand people to die of hunger, there being displayed by the latter a great constancy, inasmuch as they had once resolved upon it. (Memoirs of the Duke of Rohan, Book IV. p. 292.)

"What had this fleet come for? To negotiate? . . . It was the death of La Rochelle, and brought everything to an end. The moral blow it inflicted was so heavy, that people ran to throw themselves at Richelieu's feet. Had the English not come to drive them to despair, they might have held out eight days longer, when the dike was destroyed by a tempest, and the city could have been revictualled and still continued to hold out.[1]

"After being apprised of the treaty by which the English, his faithless allies, had delivered him over to Richelieu, Guiton, seeing his garrison reduced to seventy-four French and sixty-two English, felt that he had accomplished, and had obtained from his fellow-countrymen, everything that was possible consistent with humanity He was accordingly the first to ask that surrender be made to the King, and, sinking all personal grievance, he went to liberate from prison one of his most mortal enemies, the Assessor, Raphael Colin, and turned over to him the custody of the city, desiring by this means to facilitate the conclusion of a treaty.[2]

"Richelieu was not hard on La Rochelle. After all, what could he have done to her in comparison with that which she had already inflicted upon herself? Our soldiers, on their entry, gave their bread to every one they saw, and the King had twelve thousand loaves distributed. That was exactly the number of people remaining: all the rest had died of hunger.

"Cardinal Richelieu entered in order to have the dead bodies removed, and clean the streets; and the Temple having again become the Cathedral (Church of St. Marguerite), he said mass there[3] on the morning of All-Saints' day (November

[1] Michelet. [2] De Quatrefages.

[3] "Cardinal Richelieu and Bishop Henri de Sourdis, who had done the duties of a soldier during the siege, celebrated the first mass at La Rochelle, after having purified the churches. It may be that the hands which had so lately borne arms might have better begun by purifying themselves before taking up the offering of the Prince of Peace. But the history of humanity is full of shocking contradictions." (De Félice.) On the following day, a general procession was held, in which the Archbishop of Bordeaux bore the holy sacrament through the streets, — a

1st, 1628). The King entered in the evening, with some few troops, in complete order. Père Suffren, a Jesuit, the King's confessor, then held the *fête des morts*.

"Oratorians and Minimes, a great force of monks, entered the city, and took possession of different premises to establish chapels. The inhabitants lost their temples, and could have no more services save in a place to be designated later.[1]

"The heroic Guiton, whom a generous enemy would have welcomed, was not received by the King.[2] Exiled at first, he later returned, and served in the Royal Marine with the title of Captain.

"The fall of La Rochelle involved the ruin of the surrounding country. The unoffending cities of Saintes, Niort, and Fontenay, which had not stirred, all the ancient places of Poitou and Saintonge, lost their fortifications, and gradually all of their inhabitants who were able passed into Switzerland and Holland."

The recital we have here reproduced ends with this sinister declaration: —

"In 1628, Richelieu was obliged to make a desert of Aunis (the province) by the destruction of La Rochelle, and this was the beginning of the emigrations which continued through the entire century.

"Note, then, how this poor city, once the refuge and the delight of King Henry IV., became at last the wrath and the glory of his son, Louis XIII. She was attacked by the French,

thing which had not been witnessed for a very long time past at La Rochelle.

[1] In consequence of the conversion of the temple into a church, the Reformers were allowed an extensive building-site in the Maubec bastion, where they built, at their own expense, a new edifice. The promise made by the King to contribute thereto 6,000 livres narrowed itself down to a court promise. Its carpentry work cost 7,560 livres; its pavement and that of the street, 3,136 livres, 12 sous, and 9 deniers; and the library, 991 livres, 5 sous, and 4 deniers.

[2] Michelet.

and abandoned by the English. She was buried under a fierce and pitiless famine, and after all gained by her constancy a longer life in the renown of future ages than those cities which are prosperous in the century of to-day."[1]

IX.

Although Richelieu did not show himself insensible to the misfortunes of the inhabitants of La Rochelle, he did not extend his generosity to the Dames de Rohan, the mother and sister of the Duke of that name, who happened to be among the besieged. The first, especially, was a woman of strong character. Both had given proof of rare energy during the struggle, sustaining by their example the courage of the beleaguered. Their rank, and the extent of their misfortune entitled them to consideration at the hands of the conqueror. But the Cardinal took no account of it all. He caused them to be confined in the Château de Niort, where they were detained until the end of the war, deprived of their attendants, and forbidden to exercise their religion, — an act scarcely worthy of a magnanimous conqueror, and still less so of a minister of the Father of Mercies.

The Cardinal had not consented to receive Mayor Guiton; but his refusal did not prevent the latter's being considered a hero. The Duke of Angoulême, and the more honorable in the King's army, came to see him, after the reduction of the city. Sent into exile, with twelve of the principal bourgeois, as well pastors as laity, he returned later and served, as has already been seen, in the Royal Marine, with the title of Captain.

[1] Memoirs of the Duke of Rohan, Book IV. p. 300.

It has been supposed that he perished mysteriously; but the mortuary register of the Consistory of La Rochelle contains evidence that he died in this city. In fact, it reads, under Number 2241: —

"March 15, 1654, Jean Guiton, Esquire, Sieur de Repose-Pucelle, aged sixty-nine years, or thereabouts, has been interred."

According to all appearances, this burial must have taken place in the former Protestant cemetery, situated within the city limits west of the Rue Porte-Neuve, or Réaumur, between the Verdière Canal and the northern angle of the Rue Chef-de-Ville.[1]

"Thus," remarks M. Callot, in the notice he has published concerning this celebrated man, "Guiton reposes on the very spot where rose the ramparts which he had the misfortune to see fall; in sight of that dike, the cause of his country's ruin; opposite that Fort Louis, which was the pretext for the wars in which he distinguished himself; at the foot of that Tower de la Verdière, in short, whence on the 10th of September, 1627, by order of Matthieu Tessereau, Councillor, was fired the first cannon-shot that proclaimed the union of La Rochelle and the English."

On the 19th of February, 1841, the municipal council of La Rochelle voted a statue to Mayor Jean Guiton: its action was not sanctioned by the higher authorities of that period; but it is none the less significant as to the judgment awarded this great citizen by a calm and impartial posterity.

We have elsewhere stated that the Rochelais fought

[1] The residence of the translator of this volume is within a stone's throw of this point. — G. L. C.

for their faith and their religious liberty, and that the object of the siege was to stifle Protestantism. Were any one inclined to doubt the facts, let him call to mind the rejoicings which took place at Rome on the occasion of the fall of La Rochelle. The Pope, in fact, hastened to have a *Te Deum* chanted, ordained an extraordinary distribution of indulgences, and wrote to the King of France: "Great prince, God has been at your right hand. May He always help and sustain the force of your arms!" Had it merely been the question of having reduced a rebellious city to obedience by the forces of the crown, would the Pope have been so profoundly moved? But the truth was, they had just dealt a mortal blow to a city which was the last stronghold of a religious sect which had thrown off the yoke of Rome, and that was why this occurrence had an echo in the seven-hilled city; that was why there was rejoicing at the Vatican, and Urban VIII. ordained solemn acts of thanks.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE CAPTURE OF LA ROCHELLE TO THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.

1628–1685.

Fall of the Communal Government. — Efforts of the Catholic Clergy to make Proselytes. — Fidelity of the Rochelais during the War of the Fronde. — The Pastor Philip Vincent. — Double Abjuration of the Jesuit Jarrige. — Increasing Rigors practised against the Reformers.— Pierre Bomier, Advocate-General. — Protestants excluded from Public Office. — Abbé Gentil embraces Protestantism. — De Muin made Intendant. — Demolition of Churches, and Prohibition of Protestant Worship. — Last Provincial Synod. — Persecution of Pastors Tandebaratz, Delaizement, and Blanc. — Demolition of the Temple at La Rochelle. — Mission of Fénelon to Aunis. — The Dragonnades. — Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. — The Dispersion. — Sentences of Chollet and Elizabeth Bonami.

I.

LA ROCHELLE, conquered by famine, had surrendered to the troops of Louis XIII. Her reduction involved the fall of the communal government, and the loss of those privileges on which she had for three centuries past prided herself, while, at the same time, it delivered over the Protestants of France into their enemies' hands. In the days which followed Richelieu's and Louis XIII.'s entry into La Rochelle, the conqueror, moved by the spectacle of so much disaster and suffering, only made his presence known by kind words and acts of compassion. But when the first demands of nature had been satisfied, when the eye had become accustomed to this sad sight, pity gave place to other

sentiments, and severity was inaugurated. After the banishment of Guiton and twelve of the principal citizens, the King gave orders for the removal from the archives of all documents in which mention was made of franchises, of the liberties of the province, of the last Mayor's administration, and of the negotiations with England. The demolition of the walls was commenced at the Gate of Cougnes. On November 11th they began to blow them up; and on the 18th, the King published a declaration, in twenty-four articles, touching the system of government he desired to establish in the city. These were its principal features: —

"The Catholic religion, with all its pomps and ceremonies, was re-established; only, the five parishes, in view of the decrease in the population, were reduced to three, — Notre-Dame, St. Bartholomew, and St. Saviour.

"The priests and the hospitals were restored to an enjoyment of the property of which they had been dispossessed.

"Two monuments were ordered raised in memory of the rebellion of the Rochelais, and the King's triumph; viz. a cross on the Place du Château, upon the pedestal of which was to be engraved the history of the reduction of the city, the memory of which was to be kept up by a general procession, annually, on the 1st of November; and, secondly, by the foundation, at the Pointe de Coureilles, of a monastery of Minimes, which should preserve the history of the dike upon two tablets of brass put up over the church gate.

"The mayoralty was abolished in perpetuity, the bell of the town-hall was ordered melted, and the revenues of the town government passed under the domain of the crown.

"The city was subjected to the *taille* (a species of feudal tax).

"No stranger, not even a naturalized citizen, could come to settle in the place without the King's permission; and this prohibition extended to Reformers who had not been domiciled there before the descent of the English.

"The inhabitants were to surrender their arms." "So that," says Elie Benoit, "naught remained of that powerful city save the place and the remembrance."[1]

II.

"After the fall of La Rochelle, the Reformers, who had been an armed and powerful party, formed only a disarmed minority, faithful to the kings who oppressed them, even to the extent of allowing themselves to be imposed upon. Instead of that compact party which, under Coligny, had held royalty in check, there remained only humble Christians, who vainly sought shelter under the shadow of the throne and the laws of their country."[2]

During the remainder of Richelieu's ministry, the Protestants were far from retaining the full and entire enjoyment of the religious liberty guaranteed them by

[1] The noblest of the institutions founded by St. Vincent de Paul, that of the Sisters of Charity, has for its point of departure an organization of lay women called the "Rochelais Ladies," who, driven from their own country by the civil war, founded in Holland an establishment composed of deaconesses, to which the name La Rochelle remained attached, and who devoted themselves with admirable fidelity to the care of the poor and sick.

[2] Rosseuw Saint-Hilaire.

the law. They were compelled to suffer numerous vexations and crying acts of injustice, without any effort on the part of the government to repress the malevolence of its agents.

Louis XIII. had banished some of the pastors of La Rochelle; after the reduction of the place, there remained but three to lead the flock of afflicted ones: Loumeau, who had served since 1594; Colomiez, since 1600; and Vincent, since 1626. The first was replaced by Flan, in 1633; Colomiez had Bouhereau as his successor in 1648; while Philippe Vincent, the author of "Researches into the Origin and Progress of the Reformation at La Rochelle," died in the month of March, 1651, after a ministry of twenty-five years, during which he rendered great service to the church, and was held in general esteem and consideration. But we must not anticipate events.

Under the influence of the monks of all kinds, Augustines, Dominicans, Franciscans, Capuchins, and Jesuits, who pounced down upon La Rochelle as their prey, some conversions, more seeming than real, were obtained in the days following the capture of the city. The Dominicans boasted of having distributed over a hundred and fifty dozen chaplets. But Guillaudeau apprises us that M. Viette, a Huguenot lawyer, deceased Dec. 23, 1662, was buried by Catholic priests, who had administered extreme unction, "notwithstanding that the ministers would have endeavored to prevent it, by complaining to the Intendant, M. de La Tuillerye, of the violence and outrage committed in the house of the said Viette *by the priests, and some soldiers and men of war.*"

The Catholic clergy, conscious of their victory, used

it unscrupulously to the making of proselytes. In the struggles that they were compelled to sustain, the Protestants met with more and more hostility, as matters degenerated into a social hierarchy. They, above all, complained of the difficulty they experienced in having their writings printed, a printer's responsibility at that epoch even going so far as to render him liable to the halter. Ministers of the Gospel were consequently compelled to combine with Christian fidelity the greatest caution.

III.

During the civil war called "de la Fronde," which agitated France under the minority of Louis XIV. (1648–1653), the Rochelais sustained the party of the Regent against their Governor (the Comte du Daugnion, who had declared for Parliament), and merited the praises of Mazarin.[1] Later, Louis XIV. maintained the Reformers in the full and entire enjoyment of the Edict of Nantes, for the reason that "his subjects of the R. P. R. had given him proofs of their affection and fidelity."

But even the services they had rendered during the troubles of the Fronde, showed that, in spite of the ruin of their city, they were still able to exercise a considerable influence,[2] and make themselves formidable, should

[1] Eight Rochelais deputies, who solicited the re-establishment of the *Corps de Ville*, were made nobles; at least one of them, Gobert, was a Protestant, and had even been sent to England by his fellow-citizens in 1628. This deputation was recalled, with its titles, and, amongst the violent recriminations raised against the newly made noblemen, one finds no allusion to their different religions.

[2] The brilliancy of the maritime trade of La Rochelle is due in great measure to the activity of the Protestants. In their ranks were recruited

any one put the idea into their minds. A fear of this made them the objects of a most suspicious surveillance. But, at all events, the Protestants of La Rochelle enjoyed, during the life of Pastor Philippe Vincent, if not entire liberty, at least a tolerance so broad that that pastor found cause for congratulation in it. This state of affairs was due to the combination of moderation and firmness which characterized his ministry, as well as to the spirit of justice and gentleness by which the Intendant, La Tuillerye, proved himself animated toward the Protestants.

In the year 1631, we find Philippe Vincent engaged in a controversy with one Père Tranquille, a Capuchin superior. This discussion started from the conversion of the Marquis of La Villedieu to Catholicism. He published, on this occasion, a volume, dedicated to the members of the Reformed Church of La Rochelle, to whom he tendered it as a safeguard against the downfall into which it was sought to lead them. Some years later, in 1639–40, this same pastor seems to have entered into a fight with the Jesuits, who disputed the lawfulness of his ministry, and the religious discussions were renewed under most futile pretexts. "The attacks were more numerous than varied," says M. Delayant; "not that they did not differ in point of departure and form, sometimes applying themselves seriously to some dogmatic point, or some points of discipline, sometimes pushing their sarcasm even to buffoonery and insult, as appears by the *Litanie*, published under the name of one of

the Northern and West India Companies, patronized by Colbert, which kept up constant relations with the North of Europe, America, and especially Canada and the Antilles.

the Reformers of La Rochelle, which Vincent, in refuting it, terms blasphemous ; but, whatever be its subject, Catholic polemics always tends to its one favorite hobby, the vocation of pastors. It seems to think much less of bringing back the Calvinists to the Roman faith, than it does of separating them from their ministers. It is always the old story, 'Persuading the sheep to let loose their dogs.'"[1]

IV.

While the La Rochelle pastors were defending themselves successfully against the repeated attacks of their adversaries, an event, which was far from being expected, occurred to arouse formidable hatred against the Reformers, and to add new complications to the surveillance of which they were the objects. Pierre Jarrige, confessor and spiritual father of the House of Jesuits of La Rochelle, admonitor of the rector, and a regular preacher, was converted to Protestantism at the age of forty-two. After having summoned the pastors of La Rochelle to extend him the hand of fellowship, in order that he might take his place in the Reformed communion, in which he promised before God to live and die with the help of His grace, he performed the act of abjuration on Christmas day, 1647, under the hands of Pastor Vincent, who, to rescue him from the vengeance of his order, procured him the means of getting away to Holland. Received with coldness by the Dutch ministers, who probably formed a rather unfavorable opinion of him, he imagined them jealous of his superiority, and insinuated

[1] Historians of La Rochelle.

that it was for that reason he had not yet been given a pulpit. However, the Jesuits did not lose sight of their lost sheep. The honeyed words in which they are so skilful not succeeding in bringing him back into the fold, they had recourse to severe measures. At their instigation, the Presidial (Court) of La Rochelle condemned him to be hung, on the Place du Château, as an impostor and sacrilegious person. Vincent, who up to that time had been congratulating himself on the religious liberty he was permitted to enjoy, was involved in the terrible hatred let loose upon the refugee, and found himself included in the sentence imposed upon Jarrige. In this same judgment, a prohibition was issued, under penalty of five hundred livres fine, to Abraham Espie, secretary of the Consistory, and all others, against using the words "Reformed Church" without adding thereto the word "pretended."

Exasperated by this decree, Jarrige launched against the Society of which he had been a member the most scathing act of accusation which could possibly be directed against it, under the title of "The Jesuits placed upon the Scaffold for several Crimes committed by them in the Province of Guienne," wherein he piled up proofs of the most odious crimes, such as forgery, rape, seduction, infanticide, and false witness committed by several members, citing names, places, dates, witnesses, and without any one's daring to take up his challenge to convict him of imposture. All of which, however, did not prevent him from retracting the whole, and chanting a shameful palinode, after having lost all hope of obtaining a position worthy of his lofty pretensions.

What a melancholy instance of the lengths to which one may be led by wounded pride and an unsatisfied ambition! Not finding himself adequately recompensed by the superiors of his order, Jarrige conceived the design of embracing the Reformed religion, for which he had long had secret sympathies. But he took this step in a sort of religious pet, rather than from sincere conviction, and he retraced his steps as soon as he was undeceived. Had the Jesuits known enough to play upon his vanity, he would not have gone out from Catholicism with *éclat;* and had the pastors of Holland gratified his ambition, he would never have returned to it.

Thus ends the story of this double apostasy, which created considerable sensation, and could not but operate prejudicially to the Reformers. In fact, had they repulsed Jarrige, they would have given ground for suspicion of their faith, or their charity; if they extended him their hands, they drew down upon themselves the rancors evoked by his conversion.

Although this unfortunate affair was the signal for a multitude of obstacles and worriments for the Protestants of La Rochelle, Vincent did not cease to retain a certain credit at court. He had been deputed in 1632 and 1633 to call upon Cardinal Richelieu, by whom he was very kindly received. In 1645 he was delegated to visit the King by the Synod of Charenton; and from 1645 to 1649 he was successfully employed in inducing the Protestants to pay off without delay the financial or other obligations which had been imposed upon them; a course which served to win him the eulogies of the ministers of state, notably of La Vrillière and of Mazarin himself.

V.

In the month of July, 1651, a touching ceremony took place in the church of La Rochelle. Laurent Drelincourt, having received a call to serve, was consecrated to the holy ministry by his father, Charles Drelincourt, pastor at Paris, assisted by pastors Auboyneau, Flan, Bouhereau, and Du Faur. The sermon preached on this occasion has been preserved to us. Laurent Drelincourt also left a volume of Christian sonnets, justly esteemed, which ran through several editions, and enjoyed considerable popularity. His ministry was a blessing to the church of La Rochelle.

However, it is but fair to acknowledge that, during the time Mazarin was in power, he protected the Protestants against persecution. "The Protestants of this period only desired to live in peace, very well contented if allowed to enjoy tranquilly what was granted them by the edicts. There no longer remained any of those features which had rendered them formidable, and they were so far from wishing to take up arms to re-establish themselves, that they hardly even dared present their statements of grievances."[1]

Although the reverses sustained by the Protestants had considerably enfeebled them, the general assembly of the clergy of 1656 set upon them, and gave the signal for a persecution which lasted until 1685. It was with great difficulty that the national synod assembled in 1659. From that time the Reformers saw themselves exposed to continually increasing severities, at once paltry, cruel, and annoying. Denounced by envious rivals, they en-

[1] Elie Benoit, *Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes*.

countered much ill-will at the hands of the guardians of the royal authority: constant obstacles to their progress; constraint placed upon the free education of their children, whom they were sometimes forced to send to Saumur; trouble in securing publication of their writings; distinctions between the older inhabitants and those who had newly become so; forced participation in noisy processions, characterized by verses in which the epithet of a "band of criminals" was thrown at them.[1] It was not, however, as yet a persecution that was organized, persistent, and openly declared. Bomier made this fact very evident to them by attacking two sermons of L. Drelincourt (1656), which ended in these words: "Lord, we pray thee to have pity upon thy poor people, afflicted, persecuted, bruised, and crushed by the enemies of thy holy name." He (Bomier) taxed the pastor with exaggeration and injustice, and described in ominous words the nature of a systematic persecution. People shuddered at noting the extent of the manœuvres, the indignities, and the crimes commanded or permitted by the two orders which were ordinarily most respected, and at a time too which we still hold up to eulogy for its propriety and good order.

VI.

In spite of the disaster of 1628, the Church of La Rochelle was still one of the most important in France, as well in numbers as in the social position of its members. We have spoken of the fidelity shown by the Rochelais during the troubles of the Fronde; but the court

[1] Canonization of Thomas de Villeneuve.

had resolved to annihilate the Reformation, under pretext of extirpating heresy; and the services rendered by the Protestants of La Rochelle, instead of protecting them, made them objects of suspicion to those who desired to destroy them, and caused the first blows of the plot to be directed against them. At all events, the court took care not to precipitate matters: it was too shrewd to carry out its projects openly; it preferred to work them out in the dark.

In order to succeed in this enterprise, it was necessary for it to have at its command some man devoid of heart and conscience, who would recoil from no act of injustice, and who would be capable of every perfidy and every cruelty. Such a man was found in Pierre Bomier (1617–1685), King's Advocate,[1] belonging to a family of Niort, remarkable for nothing save its bigotry and its hatred of Protestants. "This Bomier was one of the most furious persecutors who ever rose up against Protestantism," says the author of the History of the Edict of Nantes. "He had been nursed among the Jesuits, and, having a depraved heart and a malignant disposition, had acquired a great liking for their maxims. He had a brother who had taken the garb of this order, and he was himself one of those secular Jesuits composing what they call the Congregation, and ordinarily acting

[1] In the work entitled "Heroes of the League, or the Monastic Procession led by Louis XIV. for the Conversion of the Protestants of the Kingdom of France," is presented Bomier's homely face with these couplets: —

Qu'on ne nous porte point d'envie
Si l'on me voit ici placé;
Si la mort ne m'eût devancé,
Je n'aurais pas laissé un huguenot en vie.

as spies to inform the Society of everything, and as instruments to carry out its orders and its secret designs. He was very hot-headed, a great trickster, faithless, indiscreet, devoid of integrity, and his malfeasances sometimes brought him into very mortifying positions. But there were three qualities that kept him up: his immoderate hatred of the enemies of the Jesuits, his blind deference to the maxims of that Society, and his unreserved devotion to the service of the court."

This was the man chosen to undermine and destroy the Church of La Rochelle; and we shall find that he did not disappoint the confidence of those who had set him at work.

The declaration issued by Louis XIII. after this city's surrender declared, among other things, that "no person making profession of the R. P. R. (Reformed Pretended Religion), or other than the Roman Catholic faith, would be permitted to become an inhabitant of the city, unless he had dwelt there before, and had been there prior to the descent of the English upon the Isle of Ré."

This prohibition was not at first executed with rigor.[1] A certain toleration was displayed by the political chiefs.

[1] In 1642, the "Dizainiers" or captains of wards furnished to the members of the Chambre des Salins, presided over by the Intendant de Villemontée, a list comprising two hundred and sixty-three families of the R. P. R., established at La Rochelle against the orders of His Majesty, since the reduction of the city to obedience to him. We may cite Abraham Reaux, Sieur des Couteaux, Anthoine Rateau, Auboineau, Baussay, Beauregard (gentleman), Cassandre Vivier, Chasteigner, Esprinchart, Gabriel Bigot, Guibert (merchant), Jacques Renaudeau, Baron of St. Just, Louis Hardy, Massé-Bouguereau, the Voultrons, and others. "Many others who had become Catholics, in order to secure peaceable entry into La Rochelle, afterwards returned to Huguenotism, as soon as they had become well established." — Library of La Rochelle, MS.

But it remained in their hands a weapon which could be used at the desired moment, with terrible force, against the Protestants; and that moment was not long in arriving.

In the month of October, 1661, the Intendant, Colbert du Terron, published an ordinance relating to the declaration of 1628, with such considerable extensions of its provisions that there could have no longer been a single Reformer at La Rochelle free from anxiety in regard to his domicile. This ordinance was confirmed in the following month by a decree from the Council of State, and was published by the sound of the trumpet, with an injunction to those whom it concerned, without regard to their condition, to leave the city within fifteen days, under penalty of five hundred livres fine, in payment of which "they should be held, even to the offering of their furniture for sale in the public square." To insure the efficacy of this measure, the Jesuits, who instigated it, obliged the King's Attorney, who was charged with its execution, to give place to Bomier, who was their tool; so that the victims had no mercy to expect.

Hardly was Du Terron's ordinance, accompanied by a writing from Bomier, attempting to justify its provisions;[1] publicly known, before those who had been but a

[1] The "explanation" and the "speech" of Bomier were a prejudiced commentary upon the ordinance of Colbert du Terron (1661, Blanchet, printer). The King's Attorney therein justified the extensions which that ordinance gave to the declaration of 1628, just as if any extension whatever of a rigorous measure or of a hostile act was not an act based upon the theory that might makes right; that is to say, a denial of all rights. It was accordingly Bomier himself who assumed the greater part of the responsibility for these persecutions attributed to him by Protestant authors.

short time established at La Rochelle at once set themselves to obey it; several even did not avail themselves of the delay granted them. They quitted the city notwithstanding a pouring rain which lasted for three weeks. In vain was liberty to remain in the city offered to these unfortunate people, provided they would consent to change their religion: they all vehemently repelled this proposal, declaring that they were willing to suffer even more than this for their love of the Gospel, trusting in the word of the Master who said, "Whoever shall have given up houses or lands for my name's sake, he shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit eternal life."

The position they were placed in was hard; for while they were driven from the city of their choice, they were not permitted to leave France. In 1662, several La Rochelle ship-owners were sentenced to very severe fines and penalties for having taken on board their vessels some emigrants bound for America, into territory under English domination. Louis XIV. did not wish to have those whom he was tyrannizing over expatriated.

As to those who were originally of La Rochelle, although they could not hide from themselves the fact that some of the provisions of the Intendant's ordinance would ultimately be applied to them as well, they yet believed they ought to wait until prosecutions began, hoping to obtain some justice at the hands of the magistrates, or to be reinstated by the King, should the judges show themselves inexorable. But they were deceived in their expectations. Bomier, who had been put there to exasperate matters, turned aside every means of

defence, and gave those he was charged to pursue not a moment of rest. He would have fifteen or twenty families summoned at once, without affording them time or means to defend themselves. Then he would launch into a long diatribe against the Reformers and Protestants, especially those of La Rochelle, whom he accused of abominable crimes, and whom he represented as deserving of the greatest tortures.[1] Excited by his furious harangues, the judges took no notice of any facts which might have been in the accused persons' favor. All who were arraigned before their tribunal were sure of being condemned without the privilege even of a few hours' respite. Scarcely was judgment rendered when the sergeants hastened to the dwellings of those who were sentenced : they seized the best and most valuable things they could find, to an amount sufficient to satisfy the fine and costs of court, and threw the remainder, furniture, goods, and effects, into the street. There was no better treatment for persons than there was for property. Insult was joined to cruelty. After having covered the objects of these iniquitous measures with outrage, they drove out of doors old men who could no longer stand up, children in their cradles, and women on the point of confinement, or scarcely recovered from it. The sick even were pitilessly driven out of their own houses. Some died in the arms of those who carried them. Others were taken in haste, by their friends, to neighboring villages, where sorrow completed what disease had begun.

[1] One is indignant at thinking that this exacting magistrate was not allowed to oppress the unhappy Protestants of La Rochelle only transiently, but that for twenty-five years he caused his hateful tyranny to weigh them down.

VII.

These acts of violence lasted no less than two months, without the judges, who were desirous of pleasing the court, relaxing their severity toward the Reformers. Three hundred families left La Rochelle in consequence of these Draconian measures. Pastor Delaizement was included in this proscription, under the pretext that his predecessors had left the city shortly after its reduction, and that they had not returned within a year and a day, conformably with a decree of the Privy Council, rendered in explanation of the declaration of Louis XIII. Although it is difficult to see how this provision could apply to Delaizement, he was none the less banished on this pretext. However, these severities were mollified and became rarer and rarer, either because the court, whither the Reformers had carried their complaints, had given secret orders to temper a zeal which sometimes compromised the persecutors, — or because the judges dreaded the Divine vengeance, on account of a rather strange coincidence which had made a lively impression upon them.

Hilaire Bontemps and Rougier du Vigneau, magistrates who had taken part in so many iniquitous sentences, had no sooner cancelled their official connections than the former became blind, and the latter the victim of mental aberration ; they died in that sad state, without for a single moment recovering their faculties. Some saw in this double calamity a judgment of heaven, and Bontemps himself was very well convinced of it. Without pronouncing on a question so delicate, we believe there may have been in this event

something calculated to make an impression upon their successors, and render them circumspect in the exercise of their functions. Bomier alone reaped the fruit of these barbarous proceedings. Indorsed by the court, praised by the Queen-mother, applauded by the Jesuits, he was so swollen with self-pride that he became obnoxious to his colleagues. But the Propagators[1] were so well satisfied with his services that, when the commission charged with an examination of the rights of the churches in the province of Aunis was instituted, he was made secretary of that body. Any other than Bomier would have refused such an office, ordinarily intrusted to one of the Intendant's secretaries. But Bomier knew the advantage it would give him against those whom it was his mission to ruin, and he accepted the position without showing himself at all jealous of his dignity. In the month of November, 1663, this commission was made public at La Rochelle; it did its work so well, under the skilful direction of him who had been appointed as its secretary, that, of the thirteen temples which remained in Aunis, those of La Rochelle and Marans were alone preserved. All the others were suppressed.

These cruelties were followed by a measure of perfidy no less dangerous for those whom it was desired to reduce at any cost. Protestants were driven out of every office they occupied. In 1663, there were none of them left at the Presidial. They were, in turn, excluded from the Direction Générale, and from the bourgeois militia, by virtue of two warrants (*lettres de cachet*) received

[1] This was the term applied to the monks of various orders, charged with propagating the doctrines and sustaining the interests of Catholicism.

from Paris. They were successively expelled from membership in the arts and trades guilds, — from those of pharmacy, grocery, embroidery, tailoring, printing, bookselling, and from medicine, surgery, and the bar. The Reformers who, yielding to violence, had become Catholics, were subjected to the severest penalties should they return to Protestantism (1663–64). Ministers were not allowed to preach outside their dwellings, and the number of places where worship was authorized, even temporarily, was constantly being reduced (1665). Curés had to be accompanied by a magistrate when they went to the houses of sick Protestants. Warrants from the Council of State ordered the removal of the arms of France from the door-ways of the temples, and forbade the entry into the synods of those pastors who were attached as chaplains to the persons of lords. Repeated ordinances prohibited Protestant women from engaging even in the occupations of seamstresses or midwives. The Reformers could employ no Protestant servants, on the ground that they would endeavor to establish them in their error; nor Catholic ones, because they might divert them from the faith.

Deprived of the right of voting in the communal elections, weighed down with taxes, excluded from all employments,[1] the Protestants of La Rochelle were further

[1] A large number of Protestant families were attached to the La Rochelle mint. On the 18th of June, 1663, came a rule excluding in future all non-Catholics. However, in 1746, the Protestant officials had still such a preponderance, that, under a strict execution of the laws prohibit ing the admission of those professing the Reformed religion, "in a little while the mint would have been without masters." It was necessary then to close the eyes upon this infraction, or else accept certificates of Catholicity delivered as a matter of form, or out of interest to some Protestants, who, nevertheless, persisted meanwhile in their own principles.

constrained to have all children whose fathers were Catholics baptized into the Roman Church. In mixed marriages, the choice of the children's religion was no longer left to their parents. This was the first blow at parental authority. Burials were now only permitted at night, and the number of participants, limited to thirty in these cases, was in baptisms and marriages reduced to twelve. In those places where worship was tolerated, but a single school with one teacher was allowed, and instruction, moreover, was limited to reading and writing. The newly converted (to Catholicism) were discharged from their debts to Protestants, and three years were given them in which to pay off any that they had contracted with other persons. They were exempted from quartering soldiers, and even from taxation. The Protestant officers of seignorial justices' courts were dismissed, as were notaries and other ministerial officials. Finally, the prerogative accorded by Charles V. to the descendants of the mayors and aldermen of La Rochelle, prerogatives which had been respected by Richelieu, were annulled ; they lost their titles of nobility, unless they were converted to Catholicism.

VIII.

Meanwhile, the conversion of a priest of Notre-Dame, named Gentil, occurred, to increase the resentment felt by the Catholics toward the Protestants. Du Terron, the Intendant, who, without being the friend of the latter, sometimes treated them kindly, now declared openly against them, and made common cause with their per-

secutors. In this case he felt constrained to be severe, so as not to expose himself to the denunciations of the lawyer Bomier, who, in concert with his brother, had an eye on everything that occurred, to render account of it to the Society. Gentil, destitute of caution, was not slow in falling into the hands of the official, who brought suit against him as an apostate and sacrilegious person, and handed him over to the secular power. Arraigned before the Presidial, he found himself condemned to make public recantation and to nine years in the galleys. Good grounds for this judgment had to be offered, — for it was not based upon any law, — and here is what the judges declared: "Gentil had, no doubt, for several days past, entertained the idea of becoming a Protestant, and has said mass with this thought in his mind: he is accordingly sacrilegious, and punishable in his own person."

The priest, being interrogated by the officials as to the time at which he had formed the design of changing his religion, could not answer that he had conceived and executed it at once, without taking time to reflect upon it. He would have been looked upon as crazy, and shut up within four walls, under pretext of instructing him, until this wild fancy should have passed away. But, however recent his intentions may have been, it was easy to prove that he had said mass in the interval between the conception and execution, were it only once or twice; and that sufficed to convict him of profanation and sacrilege. So that it was impossible for poor Gentil to escape the toils spread for him.

In the midst of the humiliations and wrongs into which they were plunged, the Reformers of La Rochelle

had the consolation of seeing their pastor, Delaizement (who had been arbitrarily banished, and for replacing whom no provision had been made), recalled. On June 21st, 1666, Colbert, the Intendant, announced the decree concerning him ; and on the following Sunday he resumed his duties in the church. Several Protestant families were reinstated in that year, by virtue of the same decree. The disgrace of Bomier, who was publicly accused by Du Terron of forgery and adultery, came in aid of the church of La Rochelle. Having lost all his influence with the Intendant, he had no longer the same means of satisfying his hateful passions, and the Reformers had some rest as long as the administration of Colbert du Terron lasted ; but acts of violence began again under his successor.

IX.

To form a fair idea of the system of government to which the Protestants were subjected by those who sought their ruin, it is only necessary to glance over the King's declarations and the decrees of the Council of State during the twenty-five years preceding the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. One can imagine nothing more vexatious, more Machiavelian, than these decrees ; and it is hard to understand how Protestantism could have survived such machinations.

We have just seen how, by various ordinances, the Protestants had been excluded from all professions and offices ; but here is the sequel to these inquisitorial measures. In 1677, decrees from the Council of State forbade the pastors preaching, in the places where exer-

cise of their worship was permitted, on the days when the archbishops or bishops made their visits there in person. In 1679, other decrees ordered a penalty of fine and confiscation for backsliders; — forbade lord high justices installing other than Catholic officials; — forbade holding synods without the presence of an attorney chosen by the King; — compelled abjurations to be made at the place of residence of the King's Attorney, where the bishop's or archbishop's head-quarters were; — excluded Protestants from the King's farms; — forbade Catholics embracing Protestantism, under the severest penalties; — also the employment of Protestants in the collection of taxes; — dismissed Protestant subordinate officers of justice; — interdicted mixed marriages; — ordered the return to the King's commissioners of accounts of assessments levied by the Consistories; — ordained that magistrates, syndics, and wardens should proceed to the houses of sick Protestants to ascertain if they wished to die in their religion; — commanded midwives to christen Protestant children; — forbade those of the R. P. R. to sing psalms in their houses in so loud a voice as to be heard in the street, or to use menace to keep their fellow-Protestants in their faith; — ordered that at seven years of age Protestant children might be converted; — that illegitimate children born of parents of the R. P. R. should be raised in the Catholic faith; — forbade Protestant seafaring people going to settle in foreign countries; — forbade the Reformers meeting outside their temples, or when their ministers were absent; — interdicted the holding of service in uninhabited seignorial mansions; — directed Protestants holding royal offices to resign them within three months, under

penalty of losing them; — forbade Consistories to pay other pastors than those of their own jurisdiction, and Protestants to open schools other than in the places where worship was authorized; — restored to the hospitals the property bequeathed for Protestant poor; — fixed severe penalties against any ministers who should receive acts of abjuration; — forbade ministers and preachers living within six leagues of places where the holding of worship had been interdicted; — ordered the reservation of seats in the temples for those Catholics who might desire to witness Protestant service; — forbade Catholic scholars and underlings occupying such seats in the temples as were reserved for Catholics capable of sustaining a discussion with the minister; — forbade the holding of worship in places where there were less than ten families; — directed the judges to abbreviate the deliberations of Consistories; — forbade Protestant lords to admit to their religious services those who had acquired no more than a year's residence; — commuted the death penalty into that of the galleys for the King's subjects remaining abroad without permission; — interdicted the marriage of French Protestants in foreign lands; — directed the demolition of temples where mixed marriages had been celebrated; — compelled the Reformers to contribute to repairs of Catholic churches; — forbade their attending service outside of their place of residence; — placed Catholic tutors over Protestant children, etc., etc.

X.

To this deluge of enactments and prohibitions the Protestants could oppose only complaints, memorials, statements, and petitions, which were generally rejected, although they came in from all parts of France. No human caution could shelter the La Rochelle Protestants from their enemies' denunciations, and especially from those of the religious organizations so desperately pursuing them. They published works in defence of their doctrine; but their arguments were considered and punished as attacks on the Catholic faith. The servile devotion of the provincial magistrates, who gloried in ministering to the King's hatred of Reformers, even at times surpassed the court's commands; so that the atmosphere was stifling. Humanly speaking, there was neither escape from nor remedy for such a multitude of evils; the only way to be rid of them was to become Catholic; and to keep from despair, it was necessary to look to Him who is the Protector of the oppressed.

However, Du Terron grew tired of La Rochelle, and yielded to his family's solicitations, pressing him to give up his office. He obtained the King's permission to withdraw, and De Muin was chosen to replace him. This change only made the condition of the Rochelais Protestants worse. Du Terron, who at first had shown himself hostile toward them, learned to know, and, finally, esteemed them; in spite of his bad humor since the priest Gentil's conversion, he had been favorable to them whenever he could serve their interests without hurting his own. But his successor was a man alto-

gether different in character. He commenced by great intimacy with Bomier, who was under the influence of monks, and who could only serve to inspire him with sentiments hostile to Protestants.

Scarcely was De Muin in possession of his office, when he began to treat their religion with severity and arrogance. He hastened to have engraved upon the door of the Church of the Minimes the brass plates decreed by the declaration of Louis XIII., and which, up to that time, they had refrained from putting up. But, instead of the summarized story of the work upon the dike, he substituted a new insult for the conquered: "bitter complaint, poignant reproach, bloody invective, were therein mingled. Accusations of revolt and sacrilege against the Rochelais of 1628 were not sparingly used, and the name of L. De Muin takes up more space than do those of Richelieu and Louis XIII."[1]

After this he deprived of employment all Protestant officials who were under his orders;[2] he maltreated several, and condemned to death the innocent Antoine Caron, director of the ropewalk at Rochefort, a man of integrity and capacity, who had been so unfortunate as to displease him. He was so far from being guilty of the crimes imputed to him, that he was obliged to browbeat the judges to elicit from them a capital sentence. The provost who had assisted in his execution, having come in all haste to La Rochelle to announce the news of it to the Intendant, he found him in his *salon* surrounded by

[1] Arcère. The text of these inscriptions has been published in the *Ephémérides Historiques de La Rochelle*, p. 412.

[2] See Appendix No. IV. for the ministerial despatches (1680–86), which show the situation in which the Protestant officers of the Marine Corps were placed.

officers of the marine. Upon catching sight of him, he exclaimed with a satisfied air, "Well, Monsieur le Provost, what has happened?" "Monsieur," he replied, "an honest man is dead." Upon which the Intendant indignantly answered: "And you, you are an awkward man. Is that what I asked you?"[1]

Thenceforth De Muin daily distinguished himself by new persecutions, acting toward the Reformers as if each of them were his personal enemy. He agreed with Bomier to continue to harass them, and to put the heaviest burden of the taxes upon their shoulders. He had the *taille* (a feudal tax) imposed upon the ministers, who had always previously been exempt from it. The matter of non-Rochelais residents had been hushed up; in order to bring it forward again, it was falsely represented to the court that La Rochelle was filling up with Reformers who had no right to reside there, and "who were suborning the Catholics by means of money, promises of marriage, and otherwise." Orders from Paris aroused fears of new troubles for the church, until a letter from Navailles, former governor of the city, written from Puycerda, turned aside the blow which menaced it. Although the contemplated measure had no serious consequences, it agitated the Protestants none the less, and three hundred and eighty families, including some of the most prominent, were set down as being illegal residents.

But the check upon this attempt did not slacken the zeal of De Muin. Pushed on by Bomier, he was not slow in taking revenge, by having the benches reserved for the authorities, for pastors, and for mem-

[1] Tessereau, *Histoire des Réformés de la Rochelle et de l'Aunis.*

bers of the Consistory removed from the temple. He tried also to displace the arms of France and Navarre, "which were displayed in a beautiful piece of sculpture, placed in the centre of the pediment of the principal door of the temple." Then the Protestants, who had obeyed the order for the change of benches, appealed against the removal of the arms of the King, and won their case. But in spite of their opposition, De Muin returned to the attack, and in 1678 the arms disappeared.[1]

In the year 1679, a difficulty of another kind came up, in regard to the voluntary contributions by the aid of which the Protestants of La Rochelle supported their pastors, and defrayed the expenses of worship. De Muin wished to compel them to submit their lists to him, and make their assessments in presence of the royal judge; a plan which entirely changed the character of the proceeding, and transformed a free-will offering into an obligatory tax. They were, however, compelled, by a warrant of the Council, to adopt this measure, under penalty of a fine of 3,000 livres. The Consistory, having allowed the delay accorded them to expire, those who composed its membership were adjudged liable to payment of the fine, collectively and individually. The judgment was about being executed, and they were about to be cast into prison, when M. de Ruvigny, representative of the Reformers at court, announced to them that the King was willing to offer to have them furnish, every six months, a faithful statement of voluntary

[1] Some, and among them the author of *La Rochelle Protestante*, think that this was the piece of carved stone discovered in 1852, and placed over the outer door of the church of the civil hospital.

assessments paid in to the elders by individuals, for the support of worship and of the pastors ; and that he had given notice to the Intendant of La Rochelle not to follow up this matter. So that the Reformers were freed from fear on that subject.

XI.

At this period, an effort was made to provoke a quarrel with the Protestants of the government of Brouage, because they had several schools[1] in the places where the exercise of their worship was authorized. The Intendants had hitherto let them alone. But De Muin did not long allow them to enjoy this privilege. He ordered the execution of the decrees which limited each church to a single school and a single regent. Notwithstanding the opposition of the commissioner, Cognée-Fargot, who wished to maintain the churches in the liberty guaranteed by the Edict of Nantes, it became necessary to submit to this exaction. Only La Rochelle was enabled to retain for three or four years longer her instructors, by virtue of a decision of Colbert du Terron, with which De Muin did not dare interfere.

Then the latter sought to revive the edict of Charles IX. (1561), forbidding any preaching contrary to the Nicene creed. He wished even to make the La Rochelle pastors take an oath to that effect ; but they obstinately refused, saying, with good reason, that by this means it was intended to make them renounce indirectly the belief of the Reformed churches, which only accept truths determined by Councils in so far as they conform

[1] Instead of but one. — G. L. C.

to God's word. Menace them as they might with fines and a prohibition of their ministry, hint to them as they might that they would be arrested in their very pulpits, if they went too far, they were immovable, and continued preaching. The Parliament of Paris, to which the decision rendered in this matter by the Lieutenant-General of La Rochelle had been referred, settled the question in their favor, and they were excused from submitting to the requirement.

But De Muin was resolved to revenge himself for their hardihood. To this end, he hastened to call up the alleged infraction of law by the Consistory of La Rochelle, wherein the latter was accused of having suborned the son of a man named Moreau, recently converted to Catholicism with so little publicity that his own wife, who was a Protestant, knew nothing of it: the infraction would have consisted in having this child brought up in the Protestant church; the fine of 1,000 livres prescribed in such case by the Council of State of 1677 was declared to have been incurred by the Consistory. Summoned to pay this heavy fine without delay, De Tandebaratz, one of the ministers, refused to do so, and on refusal was led to prison. The same summons having been addressed to M. Journault, a lawyer, and elder of the Consistory, it produced no effect, and he too was imprisoned. The Consistory, having held a meeting on this subject, unanimously resolved to suffer the utmost severities sooner than submit to this decision, while encouraging the prisoners to be firm and promising to leave no stone unturned to rescue them from the consequences of this arrest. In the following month, notice was newly served upon Minister

Delaizement to pay the 1,000 livres imposed upon the Consistory, which was met by a new refusal. Upon which, sergeants seized their movables and put them under the King's hands, to be sold in accordance with the provisions of the ordinance. But here, again, a warrant from the Privy Council ordered the liberation of the prisoners, and gave replevin for the effects seized, upon the depositing of the fine, which later was repaid to the Consistory.

Although these worriments often turned to the confusion of those who created them, the latter were far from being discouraged. One suit was no sooner finished than another was commenced. Upon the accusation of four journeyman shoemakers, instigated by the Jesuits, who declared they had heard M. Lortie say in his pulpit, "We are oppressed, we are persecuted, even as the apostles were oppressed and persecuted by the Jews," it was decreed that this pastor should be arrested. He was desirous of giving himself up as a prisoner, but his friends dissuaded him from it, representing that, as soon as he was in his enemies' power, they would not confine themselves to prosecuting him on this ridiculous charge of some wretches who had probably not even been inside the temple, but would attack him on the ground of his writings. He accordingly directed his steps towards Paris, and, after several fruitless trials, was disposed to return to La Rochelle, when other machinations, levelled at him and Madame Du Chail de Fontenay, under pretext that they had favored the departure from France of a young Catholic who seemed desirous to go to Holland to abjure the Romish religion, made Lortie decide to go over to Eng-

land. The prosecutions did not result in anything; but they none the less made the church of La Rochelle lose a pious and capable pastor, loved and respected by the flock. But this injury was not a matter of unconcern to those who worked to compass its ruin.

One of the La Rochelle pastors had already been obliged to leave the kingdom: to still further weaken the church, it was sought to remove one of the three who still remained. With this in view, criminal suit was brought against Delaizement, concerning a sermon he had preached on the death of Herod Agrippa, following, according to church discipline, the order of Scripture texts on which they were obliged to speak. Messrs. Bomier and Groyer, who had attended the preaching with perfidious intent, bore witness against him, and accused him of having sought to make his hearers conclude "that, as Herod had been punished by God for having persecuted the church, so would the King himself be, because of the new edicts, which the Reformers regarded as persecution." His arrest being ordered, Delaizement was willing to give himself up, and had no difficulty in refuting his accusers. He was liberated on bail, on condition of appearing when called for, and of abstaining from his ministerial duties during the continuance of the suit. But a few months later, by decree of Parliament, he was authorized to resume his charge.

The suit against Delaizement had been preceded by another against M. Brévet, pastor at Dompierre; he was accused "of having prayed with a Protestant sick man who had promised to become a Catholic." This sufficed to cause a prohibition of his ministry, and secure his condemnation to a hundred livres fine, and a hun-

dred and fifty francs in alms. His church remained vacant until the Synod was held.

There were also prosecuted, under a most frivolous pretext, the Messrs. Desaguliers, a minister in the noble house of Aytré, and Majou, a pastor at Ciré. They were charged with the crime of having exhorted some individual members of their flock to persevere in the Protestant religion. The former, obliged to discontinue his ministry, had to seek refuge outside of the kingdom, and this little church remained without a pastor. The sentence of the second was a permanent interdiction of his ministerial functions, banishment from the country for five years, a fine of one hundred livres, and a mulct for the church.

XII.

At all events, conversions did not take place fast enough to suit the liking of the Propagators. The money offered openly to those who wished to become Catholics failed to persuade the Protestants to deny their belief, and more energetic means were tried. Marillac and Carnavalet had given a sample of it: the former in Poitou, by bringing in by force those who refused to allow themselves to be convinced by money; the second at Brouage, by employing soldiers of the garrison for the conversion of heretics. Jealous of their success, De Muin wished to distinguish himself by an exploit of the same kind. In consequence, on the 10th of August, 1681, he put himself at the head of the archers of the constabulary and the marine, accompanied by a provost, an ecclesiastic, a Jesuit, and some others.

With this escort, he came to pounce upon the city of Surgères. Hardly arrived there, he gave an order to all Reformers to become Catholics immediately, and lodged his troop in Protestant houses, where it ushered in the dragonnades of Louis XIV. by swearing, blaspheming, and maltreating and despoiling its hosts, who were terrified by all these acts of barbarity. The greater number, yielding to intimidation, pretended to be converted; but when the storm had passed, several repented their backsliding, and returned to Protestantism. After Surgères came the turns of Mauzé and Rochefort; there the same scenes were enacted. In the latter place, De Muin had the city gates closed, and compelled the Protestants "to do what he wished," exercising thereafter a tyranny unknown prior to that period.

But the Consistory of La Rochelle took care to summarize in a memorial these various acts of violence, and sent it to M. de Ruvigny, who made complaint of it at court. In the following year, the Marquis of Seignelay, having come to La Rochelle, had a recital of this matter made to him by De Muin, who scarcely seemed to give himself any concern about it; from which some concluded that his credit had commenced to lessen.

The Provincial Synod of Saintonge and Aunis, authorized by letters royal, assembled that year at Jarnac, to the great satisfaction of the Protestants, who had been deprived of any in the preceding year. The Consistory of La Rochelle took advantage of it to ask that the post left vacant by Lortie, who had been compelled to take refuge in England, might be filled by M. Blanc, pastor at La Roche-Chalais; which was granted. The new incumbent entered upon his duties on the first Sunday in November.

However, Marillac's tactics in Poitou bore fruit. More than a hundred persons, having resolved to give up everything rather than be exposed to the outrageous treatment they had been compelled to undergo, came to La Rochelle with the intention of embarking for Holland or for England. These unfortunates had hardly entered the city before the Jesuits began to look them up, and were not slow in finding them. They were shut up in prison, and even in the Tour de la Lanterne. The well-known charity of the La Rochelle Protestants provided for their needs without help from the Consistory. All that Bomier and the Propagators could do to turn these brave people away from their faith was useless. Their firmness exhausted the Jesuits' patience. But, in being thrown into prison, they had been relieved of the certificates of Protestantism given by their pastors, with which they had taken care to provide themselves in leaving their province; and the Lieutenant-General ordered the arrest of those who had signed them. According to the Consistory's advice, several of the latter came to La Rochelle, and were incarcerated in the Tour St. Nicolas. Some members of the church, who had given refuge to the fugitives, suffered the same fate. Finally, Pastor Loquet, of Marennes, a man of great merit, and highly esteemed in that section, was arrested for a similar affair, brought to La Rochelle "as a very great criminal," and confined in the same Tour St. Nicolas. But all these prisoners were not long afterward set at liberty. As to the Poitou people, the innocent cause of this alarm, they were released by orders from court, to the great disgust of the monks and Jesuits.

XIII.

Baville, having succeeded Marillac in the office of Intendant of Poitou, caused the arrest at Saint-Maixent of two men, who in their examination declared that they had received assistance at La Rochelle, when they had gone there for the purpose of leaving the country. No more than this was needed in order to have the four pastors of that church cited to appear in person before this magistrate to explain the facts as to their connection with the depositions of these men. They did appear, in fact, but replied so well to the questions addressed them that the affair was abandoned.

Toward the close of December, other troubles were stirred up, before M. de Muin, by the Syndic of the clergy of the province of Aunis, and against the La Rochelle pastors, as having prosecuted their studies out of the kingdom, which, it was said, took away their right to act in France. But they denied the Syndic's competency to attack them on this head, and De Muin, who had been apprised that the King was going to take away his office, proved more tractable. He received the pastors' demand in such a way as to put a stop to this suit.

The pastoral letter of the clergy of France, of the 1st of July, 1682, a comminatory exhortation to Protestants to recognize the Roman Church, was by order of Louis XIV. to be served upon every consistory in the kingdom. Officials, syndics, curés, or others, were generally charged with this mission. But Marie de Laval de Boisdauphin, Bishop of La Rochelle, wished to do what no other prelate had done, that is to say, to pro-

ceed in person to the consistory of his episcopal city. This visit having been arranged by the Intendant, in concert with a minister and an elder, the Bishop went to the temple, accompanied by the Intendant, the Lieutenant-General of the Presidial Court, Canon Bridou, secretary of the bishopric, etc. He was courteously received by two pastors and two elders, who went to meet him even to the door of the edifice. The bishop had his hat on : he put on his square cap, which was handed him by a bailiff, and they entered in the regular order of precedence. When they had taken the seats provided for them, De Muin spoke, and stated the object of the visit. He finished by saying "that his Majesty's intention was that they should listen as carefully to the letter as to what the prelate had to add to it, and that they should profit by it." De Tandebaratz responded with propriety, spoke of the King as he should, joined to his remarks expressions of respect for the person and character of the Intendant, to whom he addressed himself throughout. "And as to the Bishop of La Rochelle," he added, "he is a seigneur whose quality and merit we have long honored." It was, moreover, purposely that he avoided giving the Bishop the title of "Monseigneur," which had been used in addressing the Intendant, desiring thereby to evidence that the Consistory's submission only referred to the King, whom the Intendant represented in their midst, but that it did not extend to the Bishop, whose authority was not recognized.

It is said that M. Boisdauphin felt wounded at this omission ; but he had the good taste not to complain of it ; he simply declared, when it came his turn to speak,

that he considered himself their lawful pastor; he deplored the schism, which he reproached the Reformers with having provoked without valid reasons. He recalled the civil wars, all the responsibility of which he threw upon the Protestants; and urged them, in the name of the charity the bishops felt for them, to re-enter the Church. This discourse was very attentively listened to, and De Tandebaratz was once more charged to respond. He did so with brevity and reserve, taking God for a witness that they had only held to their religion from conscientious motives. The clergy's warning was read in Latin and in French. The same persons reconducted the prelate and his suite, and, before leaving, the Bishop said, in a very natural way, to the pastor conducting him, "It is a long time since you have seen a bishop here." To which the pastor answered, in the same tone, "We have never seen any here, monsieur; and all that which has just happened is so novel that I have never seen its like." It is well known that the prelate had promised himself great effects as the result of his visit to the Consistory. He confessed it to a Protestant gentleman who went to see him a few days after. "I went after them even into their Consistory," said he, "and for all that, it has produced no more fruits than if I had not gone."

Such was the result of this step, so peculiar in its way. M. de Laval de Boisdauphin was prompted, we are persuaded, by charitable intentions; but he had put too high a value on episcopal prestige, and had not sufficiently reckoned upon the energy of the religious convictions of those whom he hoped to bring into his fold.

The name of Lucas de Muin is too often found in these pages for us not to add, that, after having lost his position, partly because his hatred against Reformers induced him to neglect the duties of his office, he finally retired to the country, where he died from chagrin over his bad fortune. Perhaps, too, the memory of the cruelties practised upon innocent people was heavy on his conscience.

His successor was Arnou de Vaucresson, none the less disposed than he to concern himself in religious matters, "as the one thing in the world the King had most at heart," and one knows what that meant. The new governor, Jeurre Milet, was overflowing with deference toward the ecclesiastics; he heard two masses a day, so that the Protestants of La Rochelle had nothing to expect in the way of redress for their grievances from this change of persons.

XIV.

The King's declaration, condemning ministers to a perpetual interdiction of their ministry, and their temples to be demolished in cases where a Catholic or backslider was admitted, having appeared too mild, his Majesty by another declaration, in the month of March, 1683, increased the penalty, by ordaining "that the pastors should be condemned to perpetual banishment from the kingdom, and the confiscation of all their property." The publication of this ordinance at La Rochelle was accompanied by a list of two thousand persons said to have been newly converted to Catholicism, which was furnished to the Consistory, with an injunction to allow

none of them to enter the temple, under the penalties prescribed by the King's latest declaration.

This measure was more than difficult of execution in a church as numerous in membership as was that of La Rochelle, and under such conditions public worship became impossible, for it would have been necessary to station some one at the door of the temple who knew everybody mentioned in the list, and who would take sufficient care to prevent any of them getting in. Thus the Consistory, seeing the tendency of this prohibition, made haste to assert the invalidity of the list furnished it, grounding its objections upon another royal declaration, which distinctly stated that acts of abjuration, to be in due form, must specify the date, the place, and the rank of the persons making them. There was accordingly read aloud from the pulpit, for several Sundays, an announcement, giving notice "that, in case there were present any of those whom his Majesty's recent declarations excluded from the temple, they had not been invited thither by the Consistory." Notification of this act was given to all whom it might concern, on the 18th of August, and the circumstance operated favorably for the La Rochelle pastors, when the time came, at a later period, for deciding upon their case at Paris.

By warrant from the Council of State (1683), the exercise of Protestant worship was forbidden at Salles and Ciré, where the temples were demolished and the pastors obliged to withdraw, although it was maintained at Jarrie. Though the ruin of the Protestants was rapidly progressing, effort was made to delude them in regard to the fate awaiting them, by granting

certain things which might make them suppose that sentiments of justice had not entirely died out in their adversaries. Thus, for instance, in that same year, was authorized the holding of the last Provincial Synod at St. Just, in the environs of Marennes. But this assembly, apparently favorable to the Protestants, became the cause of violent persecutions. There was established in the Synod a sort of committee, charged with watching its movements; and when the session closed, severe measures were adopted toward those who had participated. It was ordered that the minister of St. Just, and several others, should be arrested and imprisoned,— the first for having allowed strangers to preach in his church; the others for having delivered sermons there.[1]

Fanaticism spread by degrees, and even those who, by their enlightenment, would seem to have been proof against this feeling, experienced its influence. Thus the Catholic physicians of La Rochelle at this period formed an association, the laws of which prescribed that no physician could become a member of that body unless he professed the Romish religion, and that those who were not members of it could not practise medicine in the city. When these laws were presented at the La Rochelle Presidial for registration, the Protestants opposed them; but they lost their case, by decree of September 6, 1683.

[1] It was the custom among the churches to take advantage of the presence of pastors, called thither by the holding of Synods, to hear various preachers. This had been done up to that time, not only without causing any trouble, but even with edification. The church of St. Just had done no more than conform to this custom.

XV.

It had been firmly resolved upon to destroy the churches; and, in order the better to attain this purpose, the first blows were invariably directed against the pastors. It seemed as if those who led in this work of darkness were mindful of the prophet's words: "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."[1] While Du Vigier was ravaging the churches of Saintonge, Véronneau of La Serrée was practising severities upon those of Aunis. Pastor Amian, of Marans, was imprisoned for having preached at the St. Just Synod. He was charged with having spoken evil of the King. His church was deprived of the right of holding service. Guybert, one of the ministers of La Rochelle, was again arrested for a sermon, alleged to be seditious, which he had delivered in his own pulpit. Accused by two Franciscans who had been present at its delivery, Guybert was sentenced to an interdiction of his ministry, banishment, fine, and a gift of alms. He was released on bail furnished by his brother, and was allowed the liberty of the public highways. Finally, M. Benion, minister at Jarrie, was apprehended for the same cause. The great grievance alleged against him was the reading of one of the articles of the liturgic prayer: "We commend to Thee our brethren who are dispersed by the tyranny of Antichrist, destitute of the food of life, and deprived of the liberty of being able to invoke publicly thy holy name; who are even held as prisoners, or persecuted by the enemies of thy Gospel." The pastors were somehow pushed hard in their teachings; they could no

[1] Zechariah xiii. 7.

longer utter a word which was not made a cause for crimination, and every one of their sermons was liable to bring down upon them imprisonment or fine. On the 14th of July, 1684, service was for the last time held in the La Rochelle temple. Delaizement preached the sermon, which was very affecting. He little expected what was to happen on the morrow.

After the closing of the temple, it was necessary to get rid of the pastors, and this was the contrivance adopted to lay hands on the three who remained at La Rochelle. Bomier, who was always at hand when there was opportunity to oppress Protestants and do them harm, agreed with some priests of the Oratory to induce a woman named Bonneau, of lost reputation and an old offender, to persuade her relative, one Marie Gautier, of Mauzé, a backslider, who had changed her religion while De Muin's booted and spurred cavalcade were in town, to pretend she was still a Protestant, and to perform a second act of abjuration, which should be worth more to her than the first. Lured by this promise, Marie Gautier entered into the views of those who did not blush to resort to such means: she went to the La Rochelle temple, outside of which stood some accomplices who were to observe her entering and coming out; then she went before the superior of the Oratory to perform her false act of abjuration. From that moment the die was cast, and grounds for proceedings existed. Upon the testimony of those who asserted that they had seen Marie Gautier, a backslider, coming out of the temple,[1]

[1] It was claimed that the daughter of a new convert named De la Serre, whose wife had remained a Protestant, had been to the temple.

De Tandebaratz, Delaizement, and Blanc were committed as having transgressed the declarations of the King. Their colleague, Guybert, who was at Paris on personal business, was included in these procedures. Vainly did these gentlemen protest that this girl, a stranger in the city, was unknown to them. Vainly did they invoke the invalidity of the list on which her name was found: their prosecutors went even further, and the suit was conducted by Véronneau, himself a convert, four years before, to Catholicism, Bomier acting as King's Attorney.

It is a fact worthy of remark, that the most rabid against the Protestants were the newly converted. They were the most to be feared. For instance, Du Vigier, counsellor at the Parliament of Guienne, and Véronneau, criminal assessor, both of whom made themselves conspicuous by the severity with which they bore upon Reformers in Aunis and Saintonge, belonged to Protestant families greatly attached to their religion, and who felt at once grief and shame at seeing them act thus. The first was a gambler, the other a libertine. Their affairs were much embarrassed, and to re-establish themselves they had availed themselves of the offers of positions and money constantly held out to Reformers who would be converted. One would have said that these wretches were seeking to obtain pardon for having been Protestants, or that they wished to earn the wages of sin by the bad treatment they compelled their former fellow-Protestants to undergo.

This girl, who was merely a child, had managed to accompany her mother to church, without the pastors or the Consistory knowing anything about it. There must have been a furious spirit of persecution to have found in that the material for a legal process.

As it was only necessary to be accused in order to be shortly afterward unjustly sentenced, the condemnation of the La Rochelle pastors was certain. Their judgment had been prepared in advance by the Jesuits. It only had to be copied upon the clerk's register. It declared, "that the four ministers of La Rochelle were condemned to make public confession before the principal entrance of the cathedral of the said city, whither they were to be led by the executioner of high justice, clothed *en chemise*, a cord about their necks, holding in their hands a burning taper of two pounds' weight, and, when there, kneeling, were to say and declare that, in contempt of the King's declaration, they had received to their temple and worship Marie Gautier, a backslider; this done, they were to be banished in perpetuity from the kingdom: it was enjoined upon them to maintain their exile under penalty of their lives; their property situated in the province of its confiscation was to be made over and confiscated, four thousand livres fine to the King, and eight hundred livres alms, which fine and alms were to be a first claim as well upon their confiscated property as upon their other goods not subject to confiscation, to the payment of which they were to be collectively held. And in regard to the Reformers' temple of said city, it was ordered that it be demolished by themselves in a month at the very latest; otherwise, at the expiration of that period, that its demolition should be commenced at their expense, the materials resulting therefrom to be disposed of for the purpose of paying the workmen employed therein." It was certainly a noble and melancholy spectacle to see these worthy ministers of Jesus Christ allowing themselves to be despoiled of all they

possessed, and even dissuading their wives from pleading their matrimonial rights as a means of saving a part of their property, desiring thereby to teach their flock to sacrifice all for the sake of the Gospel. All honor to the men who gave the world and the Church this shining example!

The following letter, written to De Tandebaratz by Dr. Bouhereau, proves that the devotion of the persecuted ministers was even then highly esteemed by men of feeling.

"MONSIEUR, — That which you have suffered for Jesus Christ, and with a firmness and patience which have astonished strangers and comforted the children of God, renders you the object of public admiration. But the especial interest I have always taken in all that concerns you obliges me to single myself out from the crowd, not to bestow the praises which I am aware you do not ask, but to praise, with you, our common Master, in that he has given you strength to bear with such constancy, even to the end, the great trial to which he has brought you. We prayed together during the combat, and it is but just that together we should render thanks after the victory. Yes, Sir, whatever be the world's judgment as to the result of this matter, I term it success. Banishment and fines after long captivity, words of condemnation, lacerations, and flames are but shame suffered for the name of Jesus, and consequently reasons for joy and triumph. May God vouchsafe to strengthen us all, and give us grace to constantly persevere in his covenant, spite of all the temptations placed in our way. I pray to him, too, with all my heart, that it may please him to repair our loss in losing you, to make some other portion of his people the gainers by it, and to make you a proof of the truth of the promises made by his mercy to those who give up all to follow him. I ask you always, if you please, a place in your good-will and in your prayers, and I am with respect, etc.

"BOUHEREAU.

"At La Rochelle, July 20, 1680."

The three condemned ministers who were at La Rochelle, having appealed from the foregoing judgment to the Parliament of Paris, were conducted to the capital by two archers. But their departure furnished occasion for a most touching exhibition, and showed the extent of the affection of the La Rochelle church for its pastors. On that day, Sunday, October 1, the Protestants repaired in a body to the prison-house to bid the prisoners farewell. The court-yard, the rooms of the building, the Rue du Palais, were crowded. The ministers warmly embraced those whom they met as they passed out ; they bestowed their benediction upon all, and abundant tears were shed over this violent separation. Some started out to go with them on their route ; some accompanied them as far as Mauzé. Good evidence this of esteem and attachment, creditable to those faithful ones who displayed it, and which filled with unspeakable comfort the hearts of those servants of God persecuted for the right.

On the 9th of the same month they reached Paris, and were placed in the conciergerie of the palace, where Guybert made it his duty to join them in the month of December. On the 2d of January following, they were taken to the Bastile by virtue of a *lettre de cachet* signed by the King. They were not placed in solitary confinement ; their friends were permitted to visit them. The proceedings were so unjust, there was so little consistency in the accusations against them, that they had reason to look for a favorable issue ; but they were disappointed in their expectation. In order to strike the church of La Rochelle a telling blow, the cause of the pastors, who could not be condemned without committing a revolting

injustice, had been separated from that of the elders, who could be reached in a less scandalous manner. On the 18th of January, seventeen days after their entry into the Bastile, Parliament condemned the service at La Rochelle, and ordained that in this regard, and as regarded the demolition of the temple, the sentence should be carried into effect. In the sentence of the ministers, a respite was granted. This was for them a terrible blow. "Orders were issued almost immediately to the elders themselves to carry to the clerk of the Presidial Court all their registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials, there to be deposited and kept, in conformity with the declarations in such case made and provided. They were summoned to produce and render up the vessels used in their communion service, consisting of six cups and two large basins of silver, or to pay their value, according to an appraisement that was to be made upon them. Finally, they were called upon for all their title-deeds, and for information in regard to the leases and other assets belonging to the Consistory. According to a statement prepared by the elders, some months later, of all that had been taken from the Reformers of La Rochelle, (by which the Roman Catholics had profited, and which they had appropriated to themselves since the King's majority,) it appears, by the estimate and computation therein made, that the total amounted to upwards of fifty thousand francs." [1]

According to the sentence of Parliament, the La Rochelle temple was to be demolished, and Béraudin, the Lieutenant-General, formerly a Protestant, wished to have the Protestants themselves demolish it. But his

[1] *Histoire des Réformés de La Rochelle et de l'Aunis*, by A. Tessereau.

efforts to compel them to do so were useless. They all declared that, if Béraudin was mean enough to destroy the place in which he had been baptized, and where he had heard nothing that was not conformable to the word of God, they would not be the ones to carry out the injustice done them ; none consented to lay a sacrilegious hand upon the sanctuary in which they had so often been consoled and edified. A refusal full of dignity and elevation, which shows that the moral standard was higher among those who remained true to the Protestant faith than among those who had abandoned it.

XVI.

However, it was necessary to begin the demolition of the temple. This work of vandalism, commenced in the month of March, was finished in five days. The pulpit, and the commandments of God painted in golden letters upon the azure of a very large tablet, fastened to one side of the pulpit, were taken to pieces. The materials which were preserved were used later for the construction of the General Hospital, to which the King had given them. The bell, which bore this inscription in large letters, "For the Temple of the Reformed Church of La Rochelle, Year MDCXXX.," was sold to one of the parishes of the city. But before summoning the orthodox to prayer, it was flogged in punishment for having served heretical purposes, and thus obliged to make honorable amend. It was buried, and exhumed, to indicate that it needed to be born again, in passing over to the use of the Catholics. A lady of quality officiated as midwife, and another was assigned as nurse

to this new-born child. It was questioned, it was made to answer, it was made to promise that it would nevermore return to a place of Protestant worship. After that, it was considered reconciled, was baptized, and put up in the church of St. Bartholomew. Arcère, it is true, treats this as a ridiculous story; but it is told by Elie Benoit and by Tessereau, who would not have invented the tale for mere amusement, or exposed themselves to the contradiction sure to have been made had the occurrence existed only in imagination. It is, moreover, quite in the spirit of those times. On the first day, in fact, of the demolition of the temple, some of the workmen put the bell in motion, rang some "Ave Marias," and wound up with some "Agonies," which amused many of the populace, who had run in haste to witness the burlesque spectacle. Now the farce we have related was a worthy accompaniment for the "Ave Marias" and the derisive "Agonies"; "and those whose blind fanaticism had gone so far as to order the demolition of the temple because a young girl, newly converted to Catholicism, had attended service there, were well worthy of playing such a comedy." [1]

Deprived of their temple and their pastors, the La Rochelle Reformers repaired for some months to St. Martin de Ré and to La Jarrie, where service was still held, and where baptism and the holy communion were administered.

Meanwhile, the Rochelais pastors were still in the Bastile, where they received numerous friends, and where they gave edification to those admitted to visit them by the patience and serenity with which they bore their

[1] *Ephémérides Historiques.* E. Jourdan.

trial. But in the month of June their liberty was restored them by virtue of a *lettre de cachet.* Unable to remain quiet under the attainture of the infamous sentence rendered against them by the Presidial Court of La Rochelle, they desired to have judgment on their appeal before leaving Paris. As soon, accordingly, as M. Guybert had been purged of contumacy, they were summoned and heard upon the stool of repentance, and on the 22d of August Parliament rendered a definitive decree, thus expressed: "Having heard and interrogated the said De Tandebaratz, Delaizement, Le Blanc, and Guybert, the accused, upon the grounds of appeal and the case against them made, the court has set and does set the appeals by them interposed at nullity, providing that, after said De Tandebaratz, Delaizement, Le Blanc, and Guybert shall have received censure by these presents in the chamber of La Tournelle, we condemn them to remain absent for a year from the city and suburbs of La Rochelle, and to give alms of bread to the prisoners in the conciergerie of the palace, each to the amount of four livres."

"The court has censured you," added the first president; "you have the King to thank for the clement manner in which it treats you; without that, it would be impossible to avoid following out the severities of its decree." The language of this magistrate, who did not think he was wanting in his duty in exhorting them to change their religion, as they were on the stool of repentance, furthermore gave them to understand that their trouble was not over yet, and that, after returning to their families, they would still have to settle with the men who were making proselytes.

The means by which it was sought to destroy the church of La Rochelle having succeeded, the same were tried against those of La Jarrie and St. Martin de Ré. Information was lodged against them on account of the alleged entrance of backsliders into their temples. Pastor Bénion was again indicted and imprisoned. Of seven witnesses who testified in this case, six were thieves or women of ill fame. But at that time they were not particular as to the morality of those who gave evidence against the Reformers. In an ordinary procedure, it would have been natural to challenge the testimony of disreputable persons, who could inspire no confidence whatever; but when the ruin of the churches was concerned, it did not do to look too closely, and such testimony was considered ample for the condemnation of those of St. Martin and La Jarrie.

XVII.

A means no less effective for attaining the object the Propagators were pursuing was to rid themselves of zealous Protestants, capable of strengthening their brethren, and helping them in the quarrels that were thrust upon them. Thus, after having consummated the ruin of these two churches, did they endeavor to have Messrs. Bouhereau and Tharai, members of the Consistory, who had rendered great service to their fellow-Protestants, transported. After the disappearance of these two good men, it was the turn of the Marquis of Loiré, of Cogneé, of Fargot, and others.

The heads of Protestant families having been summoned on behalf of the King to renounce the heresy of

Calvin, under pain of incurring his Majesty's displeasure, and of exposing themselves and their families to utter ruin, Governor Jeurre-Milet obliged them to attend conferences intended to open the way to their conversion, adding, that "these were the last means *of this nature* that his Majesty, as their father and master, would through him propose to them for their salvation." Three priests of the Oratory, who came expressly from Paris, opened these conferences, in the month of August, in one of the chambers of the palace. They lasted for three weeks, and did not produce the desired effect. The conversions amounted to nothing, or were insignificant, and the missionaries withdrew much dissatisfied, shaking off the dust from their feet against the obstinate heretics of La Rochelle.

Arcère, in his manuscript additions for a second edition of his *Histoire de La Rochelle*, completes Tessereau's narration. "In the following year (1686), Abbés Fénelon, Bertier, Langeron, and Milon came to La Rochelle for the same purpose. Of four thousand who were converted, not over sixty were ever present at the sermons delivered by these abbés." Those who had been unable to hold out against violence desired to have it understood by this that it was to violence alone they yielded. Fénelon's mission in Aunis was brief. Accused by the agents of the persecution of having shown too great indulgence, he was soon recalled by the court. At all events, spite of some concessions and acts of complacency done to reduce God's people by the prince's authority, Fénelon had the honor to protest against the dragonnades, and to assert with courage in his correspondence the rights and the dignity of convic-

tion. He even established the fact, that there existed among the Protestant pastors a more general enlightenment, more regular conduct, better care of the flock intrusted to them, than were to be found among the Catholic priests. "We have recovered," says Rulhière, "nearly all of his references hitherto unpublished, written in his own hand, and signed by himself." It is, then, from the governmental records, cited by the learned author of *Éclaircissements historiques sur les Causes de la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes*, that, following the example of the Superior of the Oratory, P. Tabaraud, we quote Fénelon's own words, of the authenticity of which there can be no doubt.

"The Huguenots," wrote Fénelon, "seemed struck with our teachings, even to tears, ... and constantly said to us: 'We would willingly be in accord with *you*, but you are only here temporarily. As soon as you are gone, we shall be at the mercy of the monks, who only preach in Latin, of indulgences and brotherhoods. *The Gospel will be read to us no more; we shall no more hear it explained, and we shall only be spoken to with menace.*'

"It is true," adds Fénelon, "that there are but three kinds of priests in this section: the secular clergy, the Jesuits, and the Franciscans. The last are despised and hated, above all by the Huguenots, against whom they have acted as informers and prosecutors at every opportunity; the Jesuits of Marennes are four iron-heads, who talk to the newly converted of nothing but fine and imprisonment in this world, and the devil and hell in the next. We have had infinite difficulty in preventing these good fathers from blazing out against our gentleness, for the reason that it made their severity the more

odious, and everybody shunned them to run after us, with a thousand blessings. But we displayed so much deference toward these good fathers, that they could not be angry, and we were daily at their houses, keeping up constant intercourse. They live well, and are respected. If, instead of these hard and hot heads, their company will assign to this locality moderate and upright minds, they might prove very useful throughout the entire province. After all, there is nothing so good as these. As for the curés, they have no capacity for speaking, and this is a great stumbling-block for the Catholic Church, for the Huguenots have been accustomed to ministers who comfort them, and exhort them by touching words from Scripture."

The Intendant of La Rochelle, at this epoch, expressed the same opinion, which elicits from Rulhière this significant reflection: "It would have been necessary to commence the conversion of the Huguenots by means of the Reformation, and, in a word, by converting the clergy."

"Upon this period of Fénelon's life," elsewhere remarks Rulhière, "there are more panegyrics than faithful histories. The glory he so justly won later has been made to shine upon this the commencement of his career. Whatever there was of the moderate, the noble, the wise, in his conduct at this time, has been exaggerated unnecessarily. It is not true that two provinces were by his care saved from the scourge of persecution, and that he would not have accepted this mission except on that condition. This young abbé was too far from that lofty fortune, that credit, and that consideration which he soon afterward attained,

to impose any such conditions upon the government. Had his zeal been tempered by such firmness as is credited to him, he would not have been employed at all: his virtue would have remained unused. When he left, the oppression of La Rochelle and the two adjacent provinces was consummated. Louvois had already withdrawn the troops thence to send them into other districts, "in order," he says, in a letter to commandants, dated Nov. 3, 1685, "to pursue there exactly the same course toward the Protestants that you have in Poitou and the province of Aunis."

The reports which reached the ministry from La Rochelle, about the middle of December, are as follows: "I find scarcely any Protestants in La Rochelle, since I have begun to pay those who find them out and hand them over to me; I imprison the men, and put the women and girls in convents, on the acknowledgment and by authority of the Bishop." Abbé Fénelon did not then, it seems, protect these two provinces from the general oppression. He did what was better for his own glory. Arriving in the midst of this persecution, he did not follow its teachings, but gave an example to the contrary. We have recovered his letters. Some of them are addressed to Madame de Beauvilliers. There is no doubt they were brought to the notice of Madame de Maintenon, and that they contributed to the young missionary's prompt advancement. We have already quoted therefrom one passage in reference to the clergy of this section. Let us add also this one: "All these efforts scarcely sufficed to attract their attention, so frightened were they. *We encounter everywhere an incredible attachment to heresy.* The more a

preacher has impressed them, the less do they desire to hear him again. Their great motto is, 'Fly from the voice of enchanters.'"[1]

XVIII.

Toward the end of September, the Intendant Arnou undertook to explain what were the means *of another nature* that the King thenceforth intended to employ. He issued an ordinance, forbidding Reformers to leave the city, and enjoining those who lived outside to come in immediately, "in order to receive the garrison that was expected to arrive." After they had obeyed, Arnou, imitating his predecessor De Muin, addressed them angrily and haughtily. He treated them with incredible severity, regardless of merit or birth, and launched against them the most terrible threats, swearing that he knew how to conquer their obstinacy in the cells of the tower.

But threats produced no more effect than summonses or conferences. It was decided, accordingly, to bring in the soldiery. In the first days of October, seven or eight hundred fusileers, who had been employed in the conversion of Béarn, arrived at La Rochelle, and were lodged at the houses of the Protestant bourgeois. Not contented with quartering one or two in each household, they assigned them by fives, by tens, and even by entire companies. They were at first quite tractable toward their hosts, but, instigated by the Propagators, the soldiers finally proved cruel toward those who endeavored

[1] *Éclaircissements historiques sur les Causes de la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes*, taken from various governmental archives, Vol. I. p. 365.

to receive them kindly, and acted like wild beasts, respecting neither age, nor sex, nor personal condition. The violence of the soldiery obliged three hundred families to abjure their religion; but others, to the number of about eight hundred, remained faithful. Arnou cited them before him, and talked "of ruining them" unless they promised to receive instruction. Then it was that André Bernon, a member of the Consistory, said to him, in a tone which brought tears to the hearers' eyes, "You are about to damn me, my lord, since it is impossible for me to believe the teachings of the religion which I am requested to embrace." To which the Intendant replied, "It makes no difference to me whether you are damned or not, so long as you obey."

However, the ringleaders in the plot found that the troopers did not go ahead fast enough; to hasten their work they brought in four companies of dragoons, who had already shown their zeal in the environs of the city. They came in, sword in hand, as into a city captured by assault, swearing and vociferating, so that the poor Protestants, already stunned by their treatment at the hands of the fusileers, finally lost their senses altogether. "This last blow upset them all," says Tessereau, "so that they were to be seen going in crowds to the parish curés to do what was required of them."

But if many, no longer able to resist this barbarous treatment, simulated sentiments which "grace had not inspired in them," as Arcère puts it, others would not be conquered, and remained unshaken. Of this number were Legoux of Périgny (a member of the Consistory, belonging to an old family of the city), Roches-Cramahé, and Passage-Voutron; — all three of them

Rochelais gentlemen, — and another M. de Voutron, a cousin of the latter, who displayed a constancy worthy of the old martyrs. He was forced to lodge as many as a hundred and fifty-seven dragoons of the regiment of Amsfeld, without counting the soldiers of the regiment of Vendôme. He was dragged from prison to prison, and put in close confinement. His residence was laid waste, his furniture sold, and his wife and four daughters taken away to be placed in the convent of the Ursulines. Several of the same sex were also shut up in convents, without their adversaries being able to triumph over their resistance,[1] notably the Lady Gedouyn, widow of a deceased Catholic gentleman, and mother of a Jesuit; also a young lady named De Loire, sister of the Marquis of that name.

XIX.

It would be difficult to state the number of those who were expatriated by the blasts of this tempest let loose upon the unhappy church of La Rochelle; but it must have been considerable, since at this period were counted in the single city of Amsterdam between four and five hundred Rochelais refugees. There were some in almost all the other cities of Holland. They were met with in Switzerland, Denmark, Prussia, England,

[1] The convent, either near by or at the extremity of the kingdom, was the supreme means of torture by which female resistance, more resolute than that of the men, was usually overcome. What terrible scenes must have passed behind those lofty walls! what hideous dramas were enacted within the shadow of these pious dwellings! and what men must those have been who so animated the nuns that they surpassed in cruelty both the distant prison and the dragoons whom Louvois had let loose upon France, and whom people called "the devils from hell"!

America, and elsewhere. A glorious dispersion this, proving incontestably the profound attachment of the Reformers to the religion of their hope.

"Thus La Rochelle, which had resisted a royal army, commanded by the Duke of Anjou, after the massacres (of St. Bartholomew), and the reduction of which had cost Cardinal Richelieu so much time and expense, was made completely desolate by the hands of two hundred dragoons and eight hundred fusileers. The contagion of this downfall involved the Isle of Ré, as well as those Reformers who still remained in the environs."[1]

For a long time, the Edict of Nantes had been only a dead letter. Revoked in fact before it was revoked by law, its revocation created no new state of affairs: it merely sanctioned what already existed. On the 18th of October, 1685, appeared, dated at Fontainebleau, the ordinance of revocation, which forbade all exercise of the Reformed religion within the kingdom, and directed pastors to leave the country within fifteen days; promised ministers who became converts a pension, half of which should revert to their widows; exempted those desiring to become lawyers from academical studies; deprived Protestant parents of the right of educating their children, and enjoined upon them to have them baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church, under penalty of five hundred livres fine; ordered all refugees to return to France within four months, under penalty of confiscation of property; and finally forbade all Protestants from emigrating, under penalty of the galleys for men and solitary confinement for life for women.

[1] *Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes*, Vol. III. p. 862.

Although the Edict of Nantes had never been a verity, and although its violation was almost gloried in, it constituted, nevertheless, a sort of protection for the Protestants, from the fact that they were able to appeal to its provisions; but even this protection, illusory as it was, was thenceforth taken from them. From that moment they had no legal existence, or rather no existence whatever in the eyes of the state. They could invoke the protection of no declaration and of no edict. They were completely at the mercy of their adversaries, who arrogated the power over them of life and death.

"Great severities," says De Larrey, the annalist, "were practised, in all the provinces, against the Protestants. The provost-marshals went after those who assembled to pray to God, as they would have gone after brigands and highway robbers. Women were put into convents, children were torn from their mothers' arms. Letters received from Languedoc, La Rochelle, and Poitou were full of the cruelties practised against these unfortunates, whose consciences it was sought to constrain." The Parliaments of Paris and Toulouse confirmed the sentences rendered by the Lieutenant of Admiralty of La Rochelle and by the Seneschal of Nîmes, condemning to the galleys those found in religious assemblies. In Languedoc, Poitou, and Saintonge naught was heard save the complaints of those who were dragged by force to mass, or were sent to prison.

These severities were especially practised in Saintonge, the province of Aunis, and the Isles of Ré and Oleron, from which over six hundred persons went to England. Toward the end of the seventeenth century

the population of Saintonge and Aunis[1] was so greatly diminished, that even those who carried out the rigors of power against the Protestants could not refrain from deploring the melancholy consequences. "The district of La Rochelle," said the Intendant Bégon, in a memoir cited by the Count of Boulainvilliers for the information of the Duke of Burgundy, "is depopulated of one third of its inhabitants, and this diminution is going on from day to day. The cause of this depopulation is the flight of the Protestants, and the inability of those who remain to marry without repugnant formalities. All the parishes are filled with young and old maids, and unmarried men who pass their lives in a celibacy prejudicial to their consciences and to the state." If we may believe the same official, the ecclesiastics, and chiefly the curés, lived in complete idleness. They were ignorant, sordid, tricky, and devoid of charity. Laziness and disorder were inaugurated amongst the monks of an infinite number of small convents, the revenues of which might have been much better employed in feeding and assisting the poor. The hospitals were very badly managed, and so throughout.

Thus did Louis XIV. thrust the quietest and best of his subjects outside the pale of humanity, and make them the objects of an atrocious persecution; using against dissenting Christians all the tortures employed by the pagan Cæsars against the first followers of a religion which overthrew that of the empire. In this case, the inspiration most certainly came from Rome. In the quinquennial assemblies the clergy never failed to call

[1] These two provinces together compose the present Department of Charente-Inférieure. — G. L. C.

for the suppression of the Huguenots, "by overturning their pestilential pulpits and their synagogues of Satan."

The great enemy of the Protestants of La Rochelle, Bomier, had experienced immense satisfaction at learning this news, which seemed to crown the work in which he had been engaged ever since his arrival in the city. But it was the triumph of the wicked, which is ever short-lived. He died shortly after, without the respect or regret of any one. His death, which, under other circumstances, would have been considered by the Protestants of La Rochelle as a deliverance, was received by them with a sort of torpor, for they had been, as it were, stunned under the terrible blows constantly dealt them. They had had so much ground for complaint, moreover, against all those who ought to have protected them, that they perhaps feared it was only a change of the scourge, and that they were gaining nothing by the death of this extortioner.

XX.

While the Protestants were thus being despoiled of all their rights, and had nothing to expect from human aid, the Lieutenant-General of La Rochelle, assisted by seven other judges, rendered, under date of December 15, two sentences to which one finds it almost repugnant to allude, so horrible are they. One M. Chollet, a gentleman aged eighty-two years, and of irreproachable life, had fallen seriously ill. The curé of the parish presented himself to inquire *if he desired our Lord brought to him;* to which the patient replied, that he did not believe it in the power of man to do that; that our

Lord Jesus Christ was at the right hand of God, his Father, whence he would come at the last day to judge the quick and the dead. "It is in heaven that I seek him, it is in heaven that I worship him," added he.

At this response the curé went into a violent passion, and withdrew, uttering threats which aggravated the patient's condition to such an extent that he expired a few hours after. Scarcely had he drawn his last breath when proceedings were begun against him. "He was declared attainted and convicted of the crime of heresy, in reparation for which his corpse should be dragged on a hurdle by the executioner of high justice through the wards and centres of the city, and cast into the potter's field." This sentence was at once executed. The body of the deceased, which had been put in prison through the wickets, was taken thence, dragged naked through the streets and wards, and thrown into the potter's field; accompanied by some of his relatives and friends, who followed the executioner, and by a great number of women crying out, "This end is glorious: we wish to die like this man: let the same be done with our bodies after death."

But the rage of the Propagators was still unsatisfied, and, spite of the bad effect this execution had, they were pleased to try it again. A servant named Elizabeth Bonami, of the town of Arvert, in Saintonge, was visited during her illness by the curé of St. Jean du Perrot, to whom she declared "that she wished to die in the Reformed faith, which she had always professed, and then begged him to withdraw, inasmuch as she did not recognize him as her pastor." As soon as she was dead, her corpse was carried to prison. Proceedings against it

were instituted, as the result of which it was condemned to the same penalty and the same treatment as that of the aged man whose tragical story we have just related.

These were the means adopted to win the hearts of the newly converted, and render them attached to the religion which it was sought to impose upon them. After having vented their fury upon the living, the rage of the Jesuits was let loose on the dead; it stooped even to the defilement of corpses. But these indignities only served to arouse public disgust, and produced an effect contrary to that desired. Thus the Bishop of La Rochelle remarked to those who spoke to him on the subject, that he very well knew the injury all this was doing Catholicism; that he had said so, but that the Jesuits had carried their point, and he was going to write to the court, so that it should not happen again. Such scenes, in fact, did not again happen; there was fear of the sorry impression they might produce upon the newly converted, and the Reformers had the melancholy privilege of being allowed to bury in private their deceased relatives and friends.[1]

[1] Etienne de Champflour, Bishop of La Rochelle from 1703 to 1724, while entirely approving the intervention of the civil power for the conversion of Protestants, had, notwithstanding, the honor of perpetuating the tradition of Fénelon, by addressing to the clergy of his diocese these truly Christian recommendations: "Conversion is a work of the heart, and the heart is only won by way of persuasion and gentleness. The curés and other workers engaged with new converts should always use this way; it will always afford them every demonstration of affection and zeal: it will enable them patiently to bear all they have to suffer by reason of the others' obstinacy, lack of frankness, or even the fits of anger and abuse that may escape their lips."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCH UNDER THE CROSS. — THE ROCHELAIS PROTESTANTS FROM THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES UNTIL THE PROCLAMATION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. — CONCLUSION.

Protestants remaining in France confounded under the false Designation of New Converts, or else put outside the Pale of the Law, as regards their Status as Property-holders, Heads of Families, and Christians. — Obstacles thrown in the Way of their Marrying. — Legitimacy of their Children contested. — Carrying off of their Children. — Meetings in lonely places surrounded by the Constabulary. — Persistency of Pastors in the Wilderness, who, at Peril of their Lives, blessed Marriages, celebrated Baptisms and the Holy Sacrament, and set forth the Word of God. — Cruel Proceedings against the Preachers. — A Confession made by a Protestant Woman of Saintonge before the Bishop of La Rochelle. — Reorganization of the Church of La Rochelle. — Fidelity of Protestants to the King. — Spirit of Toleration shown by the Marshal of Senneterre. — Situation of the Reformers. — The Civil Status restored to Non-Catholics. — The Bishop of La Rochelle and the Superior of the Oratory. — Proclamation of Religious Liberty. — Definitive Organization of the Reformed Church. — Conclusion.

I.

THE number of Protestants who sought refuge abroad, in consequence of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, has been variously stated. Some give it as eight hundred thousand, others three or four hundred thousand, and writers hostile to the Reformation do not estimate it at less than two or three hundred thousand. Be this as it may, the contingent from La Rochelle in this exodus seems to have amounted to about four thousand persons. "The revocation," says Tesse-

reau, "took away from our city between thirty-three hundred and four thousand persons of those more prominent by birth, fortune, and merit." It does not enter into our plan to follow these persecuted brethren into foreign lands, nor estimate the importance of the services they were enabled there to render in an industrial or commercial point of view. We refer those of our readers who desire the most minute details on this subject to the excellent work of M. C. Weiss, *Histoire des Réfugiés Protestants*, published in 1853.[1] Let us confine ourselves, as the title of this work requires, to observing those who remained in their ungrateful country in the midst of the furnace of afflictions.

II.

The revocatory edict forbade Protestants to emigrate. It was hoped that, deprived as they were of their pastors and religious exercises, they would sooner or later become the prey of Catholicism. But this prohibition had the additional inconvenience of rendering the authorities suspicious as to the disposition they might make of their possessions, for it was natural to suppose that oppressed citizens who had the secret intention of emigrating would seek to conceal their property, in order to save it from the confiscation to which it would be otherwise subjected after their departure. The La Rochelle Protestants were certain to

[1] The *Revue de l'Aunis*, published, Oct. 25, 1869, the biography of Madame de la Fite, reader to Queen Charlotte, and governess to the princesses of England (1737–1796), an inedited page from the *Histoire littéraire du Refuge*, presented, at the meeting of the Sociétés Savantes des Départements, to the Sorbonne, by M. de Richemond.

be more especially the object of such surveillance, for they were more favorably situated for passing the frontier than those of the interior. Thus we find them, in the years following the revocation, subject to numerous vexations relative to their houses and lands. To prevent their disposing in whole or in part of the immovable property they possessed, their right of ownership was modified, or rather they were put outside the pale of the law as proprietors. For them this right was no longer the *jus utendi et abutendi* of jurisconsults. Frequent declarations from the King forbade the sale or hire of the least part of their property without his Majesty's permission, which became a source of worriment on the part of the Intendants, who only accorded authority to sell after a minute inquiry. "I beg you to have this statement verified," wrote Amelot to the Intendant d'Ablois, when he sent back some petitions from the Protestants, "and to tell me if you see any objection to granting this favor, or to have an account given you of the use it is desired to make of this sum." [1] When permission was accorded, a short delay was granted to effect the transaction, so that, being pressed to get rid of their property, they were at the mercy of the purchasers. Sometimes distant Catholic relatives of fugitive Protestants solicited and obtained the use of their property, to the detriment of the nearer Protestant relatives remaining in France. This was carried to such a point that a M. Froger sought to hinder one Mlle. de Lussaudière, his relative, from making a will, on the pretext that he was her heir. The clergy

[1] The sum which was to result from the sale. *Archives Départementales*, C, 152.

naturally sustained the petition of the newly converted; but the Chamber of Commerce of La Rochelle, which counted some Reformers among its number, gladly supported the cause of Protestant merchants unjustly prosecuted. (C, 148–152.)[1]

The newly converted themselves were not exempt from these injustices. They could not, before a certain time, dispose of the property of fugitive relatives, of which they had obtained the use, and this measure applied to their own property, so much was the sincerity of their conversion suspected. Imagine the annoyance, the complications, that had to be submitted to in their commercial interests, as well as in their family affairs, by persons who could not dispose of their lands or their houses, not even of a single lease, without permission from higher authority. "Why," it may be said, "did they not turn Catholics? They would have been freed from these restrictions and obstacles." Yes, but they would have belied their consciences, and they preferred to suffer these things rather than act against their religious convictions.

[1] On May 30th, 1740, a decision from the Seneschal's office of La Rochelle affirmed the will of August 9, 1738, by which a Protestant woman of that city, Suzanne Faneuil, Widow de la Croix, had appointed her son, Faneuil de la Croix, her general legatee, under the customary rules. Like herself he was a Protestant (although he had received at Bordeaux the nuptial benediction of a Catholic priest, in order to conform to the royal declaration of May 14, 1724). This appointment was to the detriment of her grandchildren, Pierre-Abraham and Marie-Suzanne-Victoire, born of Protestant parents, but raised in the Catholic religion, by reason of the second marriage of their mother, Marie-Anne Millorit, to a Catholic, a M. Dubrocucq. Marie-Suzanne-Victoire de la Croix had even, against the wish of her grandmother, espoused a Catholic, Jean Pichon, director of octroi taxes for the district of La Rochelle. They attacked the Seneschal's decision, asking the nullification of a testamentary act made, they alleged, in a spirit of hate of the Catholic religion.

III.

It was not only as property-holders that the Reformers were held in servitude, but also as fathers and heads of families. That inviolable sanctuary of the family, that retreat so sweet which heaven has given to the heart of man, was profaned and harassed most scandalously by the executors of the revocatory edict. Enjoying no civil status in their own country, they could not regularly marry or establish the position of their children except by having recourse to the ministers of the Catholic religion, custodians of the registers of births and marriages, who alone were competent to issue the certificates or attestations needed to prevent their wives from being stigmatized by the name of *adouées*,[1] and their children from being considered illegitimate. But the clergy only delivered these papers for good cause, and on conditions humiliating to those in need of them.

Did two persons decide to live together, merely declaring before witnesses or a notary that they took each other for man and wife, they were charged with an offence against morals and with living in concubinage. Did they consent to be married by the Romish Church, it was necessary to have certificates of confession, which were difficult to procure, even for money ; for the curés who were disposed to soften the lot of their Protestant fellow-citizens were severely punished, and in 1746 the Intendant of La Rochelle, Barentin, condemned one Pierre Louis Montfort, curé of Annezay, to the galleys for life, as convicted of having joined Protestants in marriage without observing the formalities prescribed

[1] An injurious term, a synonyme for "coupled."

by the laws of state and church, and of having given certificates of marriage to three Protestant couples[1] without their having appeared before him. The marriages were declared null, and the husbands were banished for three years from the district.[2] Was a child born, it was necessary to bring it to church to be baptized according to the Catholic ritual, under penalty of imprisonment and fine.

What was the result? It was this, that, in order to conform to legal requirements, in order not to incur fines, and not expose themselves to annoyances of all kinds, they made believe they were Catholics, while in their inmost hearts they cursed that Catholicism which, after imposing its dogmas and its practices, had usurped the rights of parents, and despoiled the Reformers of the paternal power. This was demoralizing; but what did morality amount to at this sadly memorable period? The great thing was to submit to the Church, even though it were hypocritically. This submission answered for every virtue.

Just indignation is felt against slave-owners, against American planters, who, in contempt of the most sacred rights of nature, took the poor negroes' children, as if they were inferior animals born on their lands, and disposed of them as their own property. But was this more cruel or iniquitous than to take the children of Protestants, and tear them violently from their families, to place them in convents, where it was endeavored to stifle their domestic affections by seeking to

[1] Pierre Fauconnet and Jeanne Bouclier, of Saujon; Jean Blais and Jeanne Meschinet, of Saint-Just; and Elie Fleuri and Marie Brouard, of Guâ.

[2] Haag, *Archives Départementales.*

persuade them that their parents were damned, and by bringing them up, against their wills, in a religion they abhorred? Is the infant's soul less precious than its body, and was there not, in this instance, a moral torture worse than a physical one? There has been a strong feeling for years, and with reason too, in regard to the abduction of the Mortara child, carried off secretly from a Jewish father and mother, to be shut up in a convent at Rome, and handed over defencelessly to Ultramontane proselytism. But the kidnapping of Protestant children from their mothers, crazed with grief at losing the fruit of their loins, — was it anything else than the abduction of the Mortara child on a grand scale?

But these odious acts of confiscation, a single instance of which suffices at the present day to elicit universal reprobation, were practised for an entire century upon Protestants. All the children were not carried off, it is true: it would have cost the despoilers too much to feed them, and those belonging to the poor were generally left to their families.[1] Catholicism knew how to choose its prey, and if any family upon which attention chanced to turn, as being rich and capable of paying good board, showed itself rebellious against the demands of the authority wrought up by the priesthood, it pitilessly carried off the son or daughter, preferably the latter, and forced it to pay a stated price to the community charged with its instruction. By this means a soul was gained

[1] When the family could not pay the necessary board, the unfortunate children were sometimes sent to the hospitals nearest their places of abode; a measure all the more odious, for the reason that at that period they put in each bed five or six human bodies, sick, dying, and dead. Children seldom entered there except to die.

to the Church, and an income to the convent receiving it among the number of its neophytes. Thus it was that in the month of December, 1733, Marie Meschinet de Richemond, belonging to a Protestant family of La Rochelle, was taken away from her parents, by virtue of a *lettre de cachet*, to be shut up in the convent of the Filles de la Providence. On the 17th of July, 1734, at the instance of her family, the King commanded the Lady Superior to set her at liberty; but in spite of the formal order of Louis XV., the convent refused to release its prey. Tormented and deprived of all communication with her people, the unhappy captive abjured her faith, and took the veil, in 1735. In the month of December following, her father was obliged to settle upon the newly made nun a dowry, payable annually and forever. On the 25th of November, 1740, the recluse died of grief, without having been able to see any other member of her family than a younger sister, introduced secretly by a Catholic servant. The child found it difficult to recognize her in her nun's garb. In spite of divers complaints to the national assembly, to the Convention, and to the Council of State to have this payment annulled, the family was obliged to continue it until the reign of Louis-Philippe, when it was abolished, in 1840.[1]

The children of Protestants who were left with their parents were, moreover, closely watched, to see that they attended Catechism and the Catholic schools. Exact information was kept as to the number in each family, and the list of those who did not habitually attend the schools patronized by the Church was ad-

[1] *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme*, XI. 199.

dressed to the Intendant, who took steps to enforce their attendance. The new converts especially, who were known to be Catholics only in name, were compelled to give a strictly Catholic education to their children. The constabulary were charged to keep close watch over them until they should have been baptized by the priests. Two women of the commune of Chaillevette, who had profited by the passage of Pastor Gibert through the environs of La Tremblade to have their children baptized, received immediately a visit from the constabulary, to compel them to carry them to church and have them rebaptized by the curé. "The ceremony concluded," say the minutes of this affair, "we took from the hands of said individuals the pretended certificates that their children had been baptized as Protestants."[1]

"We desire the establishment as far as possible of masters and mistresses in every parish where there are none," said the edict of December 13, 1698, "in order to instruct all children, and notably those whose fathers and mothers have made profession of the pretended Reformed religion, in Catholicism, and in the necessary prayers, to lead them to mass on every working day, to give them the information they need on this subject, and to take care during the time they are in attendance at said schools that they are present at all the divine services, both on Sundays and on holidays." In consequence, the Bishop of La Rochelle chose four sisters of the Instruction Chrétienne de l'Enfant Jesus to teach in the city; they were soon replaced by Gray Sisters, two to care for the sick poor, and two for the school.

[1] *Archives de la Charente-Inférieure*, C, 136.

Notwithstanding the extreme repugnance shown to marrying under the Romish Church, and performing the acts preliminary to this ceremony, such as auricular confession, etc., several finally made up their minds to it, so that their children should not be considered illegitimate, and might, eventually, inherit from their parents.[1] But others preferred to expose themselves to these consequences rather than to submit to what was exacted of them. They contented themselves with a purely civil contract, with a marriage *à la Gaumine* (a very ancient custom in the kingdom, and conformable to ordinance), while waiting the coming of some minister of the Gospel to bless their union. "Another custom which was generally prevalent," says the academician Rulhière, "was to have marriages blessed by aged men, heads of families, until the newly married couple could receive the benediction of some minister privately." We copy further on some certificates proving that Protes-

[1] The National Synods of the wilderness (*du désert*) of May 16–17, 1726, pronounced grave censure upon those who had their marriages blessed, or their children baptized, in the Romish Church. They obliged them, before being received at the Lord's table, to publicly ask pardon of the Church for such culpable cowardice, and to promise not to relapse into it. Without this severity, the timidity of some, the calculations of others, and the bad example of many, threatened to ruin everything.

The Synod of Sept. 11–17, 1748, expressed the liveliest indignation, mingled with grief, against those who, in order to obtain the inheritance, availed themselves in court of the illegitimacy of their brothers' marriage. (De Félice.)

Of a hundred and eight persons arrested from 1748 to 1755, for having attended Protestant worship, and detained in the prisons of La Rochelle, sixteen declared themselves Catholics, forty-seven Protestants raised in that religion; nine who were Catholics up to twelve years of age had become Protestants because their parents belonged to that communion, twenty-four Protestants had been married in the Church, six affianced before notaries, and six joined in wedlock in the wilderness by ministers.

tant marriages were celebrated in the wilderness by itinerant pastors. As for interments, they could not be made by daylight, nor in the cemeteries; they were made at night, in gardens or cellars; so that, from birth even to death, the family sanctuary was invaded and troubled by those who should have surrounded it with respect and affection.

IV.

But it was, above all, as Christians in the exercise of their religion, and following the dictates of their consciences, that the Protestants were outraged and persecuted after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. We have had occasion to say that this edict itself had been powerless to protect them against the violence of the Catholics; but, the Reformed religion legally abolished, there was no longer any means of relief from the severities of a legislation which did not even recognize their existence. In point of fact, and to him who could read the heart, there were still many Protestants in France; but in point of law there were no longer any, and there is nothing that would not have been readily sacrificed to this fiction, or rather this falsehood. The small number of temples remaining in the country were demolished. Why should they have been left standing, when in the eyes of the law there were no longer any to frequent them? Those to whom divine worship is a most imperious necessity were thus compelled to hold it secretly, taking every precaution against discovery, as had their ancestors in the time of Francis I. and his successors. But their adversaries

tracked them out, and they were pursued and often punished for it, even as late as the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Before entering into other details on this topic, we may be permitted to quote a fragment of the will (in their own handwriting) of Samuel Majou and Marguerite Desmé, dated January 12, 1696, published by M. Paul Marchegay, in 1854, and which describes, in a striking manner, the situation in which the Protestants remaining in France stood, and by what sentiments they were animated: —

"We have once more to render especial thanks to God," say they, "that we were born in his holy religion, and that we still have its precepts in our hearts, although it is no longer publicly professed in this kingdom, since the year one thousand six hundred and eighty-five, in which year the King revoked all our edicts, charters, and privileges, and caused our temples to be overturned. He sent regiments of dragoons to practise incredible cruelties upon those who would not register their intention before the curés to renounce the heresy and errors of Calvin, and to follow the ceremonies of the Roman Church. The dragoons' violence caused us to commit this cowardice, as it did others, for which we ask pardon of God. We did not attend service, which brought down upon me, Majou, eighteen months of imprisonment in the Bastile at Paris.[1] But God sustained me under the threats, ills, and promises that were made me; so that I came out without having yielded in anything to the monks sent to make me, and others in the same condition, visits of remon-

[1] He came out thence on November 19, 1690.

strance and threatening." "Remember," they add, addressing their children, "that you have taken a covenant, in the religion of God and your fathers, by means of the baptism which you have received. Never renounce this covenant; on the contrary, make it perpetual in your families from generation to generation. . . . And as to Charlotte[1] (daughter of a fugitive son-in-law), who was violently taken away from us, and put into a convent, we beg of you all to do what you can to obtain her release. We give them here our special benediction, and also their little ones. We exhort them to be wise and God-fearing; we ask God for you and for your children that he will do to you as to the penitent thief upon the cross, saying to your souls as they leave your bodies, 'Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' Read the Holy Scripture and all other sorts of books, especially those of piety; there are none of them from which benefit cannot be derived."

V.

On the 3d of July, 1721, occurred the departure of nineteen Protestants, who had become celebrated as the "La Rochelle prisoners." Arrested in the environs of Nîmes for having attended a religious gathering, they reached our city on the 1st of August, 1720, after having traversed France in the midst of privations of every

[1] She was raised in the Catholic religion, and, on coming out of the convent, married Charles-René de Farcy, Lord of Roseray, in Anjou. Their daughter married Anne-Arthus de Bonchamps, Lord of La Baronnière, near Saint-Florent-le-Vieil, and was grandmother of the celebrated Vendean general.

kind. Condemned to transportation to Mississippi, they obtained, after interminable difficulties, leave to embark for England; and M. Dartis, chaplain of the English embassy, came to meet them at La Rochelle. They were the objects of the most tender sympathy during their stay; clothing, food, money, and attentions were lavished upon them. More than four thousand persons were present at their departure, and touchingly bade them adieu; which proves that, in spite of the booted and spurred minions and dragoons of Louvois, Protestantism still counted a goodly number of followers in our city.[1]

The commandants of provinces had received orders to visit the houses of Protestants, to seize Protestant books, indeed even the Bible, and throw them into the flames. But these *autos-da-fé* had no other result than to scandalize the new converts, and the Intendant of La Rochelle felt obliged to forbid the ceremonious burning of the confiscated books by the missionaries.

The dragoons still kept guard along the coast, acting in concert with the farm hands; they stopped several parties of Protestant women and children from the Isle of Ré, who were about starting for Holland. The fugitives hid themselves " under bales of merchandise, under piles of coal, in empty hogsheads, mixed up with others full of wine, brandy, oil, and other liquids, and in which there was no opening except the bung for them to breathe through. They remained in this constraint, awaiting the wind or the convenience of officials, for periods of from eight to fifteen days; and eagerness to escape from a country where conscience was too greatly

[1] Jourdan, *Ephémérides*, p. 232.

oppressed gave them strength to bear inconveniences which, ordinarily, would have exhausted their patience in two hours." [1]

Royal ordinances of May 14, 1724, and April 9, 1747, confirmed by edict, April 1, 1749, contained express and reiterated prohibitions "to all subjects, of whatever state, quality, or condition they might be, not to hold any other religious services than those of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion, and not to assemble for such purpose in any place on any pretext whatever, under penalty, for the males, of condemnation to the galleys for life, and for females, of having their heads shaved, and being shut up forever." In spite of this prospect, the Reformers held secret meetings in the country, and courageous ministers from time to time came to preside over them at the risk of their lives. This is proved from the correspondence of the Intendants of La Rochelle, as well with their subordinates as with officers of justice and the Catholic clergy; also from special instructions to one of their number, M. Baillon, to carry out these ordinances in the district of La Rochelle. It is with the same end that certain commissions from the King, under warrant from the Council of State, assign to their successors, De Blair and Pleurre, "full jurisdiction and cognizance of all infractions committed by Protestants against the declarations forbidding them to assemble to pray to God according to their consciences during the life of his Majesty."

Sure of gratifying the court by the display of zeal against Protestants, the agents of authority took good care, and were not slow in acquainting their superiors

[1] Elie Benoit.

with the infractions of the King's edicts which came to their knowledge. Chastelard, subordinate officer at Marennes, seemed especially glad to attract the Intendants' attention to clandestine meetings held in his section. His correspondence with Arnou is full of denunciations, sometimes against nocturnal assemblies which had been held in the environs of Royan and La Tremblade, sometimes against those who had attended them, and sometimes against the ministers who had there preached the Gospel or performed marriages. On the 7th of July, 1730, the Vicar-General of Saintes wrote from his neighborhood to the Intendant: "I have hitherto regarded the Protestants of this province as quiet enough, but I notice that they are growing terribly bold, and that there are but few places where they have not had meetings during the year; it seems that, the more attention and desire to lead them back is shown them, the more they persist in their error." (C, 135.)

VI.

The holding of meetings wherein prayer was made to God, where his word was preached, and where the sacraments of the New Covenant were administered, having been constituted a crime against the state, it became the duty of magistrates to pursue and disperse them whenever cognizant of them; accordingly, they placed at their agents' disposal all the resources of which authority is possessed, to discover and break them up. Soldiers of the garrison, archers of the constabulary, bailiffs, coast-guards, all were placed under contribution to surprise these criminal, shall we say, or inoffensive as-

semblages. But vainly were disguised emissaries directed to the places where it was supposed the Protestants were to meet; vainly was it sought to intimidate or corrupt those who were presumably able to facilitate the discovery of the delinquents; vainly were considerable sums offered those who knew the pastors' retreats, to induce them to betray them: sentiments of honor and fidelity dwelt in the hearts of these people, objects of contempt and hatred; no Judas appeared to sell those who had devoted themselves to bringing them the word of life, and the bribes offered the denouncers were as little effectual as were the goings and comings of the constabulary. The *gendarme* records narrate in a manner quite entertaining the want of success attending their efforts to capture the preachers,[1] or to arrest persons who had been married in nocturnal assemblages; they also describe the situation of the new converts of La Rochelle, who refused to take part in processions, to attend mass, and to receive the sacraments of a church not approved by their consciences.

The farm-hands rivalled the zeal of the *employés* of the Intendant in apprehending any of the pastors who were travelling about the country. It was desired to make an example, and to intimidate those who followed their preachings; but it did not succeed. The report

[1] "Although tyranny had decreed most severe punishments against ministers who dared return to France without a written authorization from the King himself, and against those who attended clandestine preachings, there were found pastors brave enough to come back to the kingdom to preach the word of God to their desolate flocks, and there were found, too, faithful ones who were sufficiently intrepid to repair to the spots where the prohibited teachings might be received. Hence the term 'churches in the wilderness.'" (Anquez, *Histoire des Assemblées politiques des Réformés de France.*)

drawn up by one of them enables us to be present in imagination at one of the meetings which the Protestants called a "meeting in the wilderness." Here is this curious document, as it exists in the archives of the Prefecture (C, 139): —

"This day, July 11, 1750, at ten o'clock in the evening, we, Matthieu Villain, Michel Rousseau, and Pierre-Henri Vinet, all *employés* upon the farms of the King, etc., certify that we proceeded this day to the village of Coulonges, near Mornac, two hours from La Tremblade; about ten o'clock in the evening we saw several persons coming from all directions, which persons assembled in a field surrounded by woods, adjacent to the warren of Mornac; being present, we slipped into the crowd, composed of the number of about four thousand persons of both sexes, the women having hoods, their hair down, and short cloaks, in order to disguise themselves, and the men wearing caps, gowns, and cloaks: having perceived that there were about two hundred horses forming a line around the said assemblage, being there, we saw M. Dubessé, minister of the Pretended Reformed Religion, and preacher, mounted in a pulpit, clad in a sort of black cassock, with a band and a square cap, and who appeared to us to be about thirty-five or forty years old, with his hair powdered and curled, about five feet high, pitted slightly with small-pox, and having red lips; who, the said Dubessé, preached to the assembly for three hours. He spoke upon the subject of the Eucharist; then he exhorted them to shun gluttony, laziness, anger, and unchastity: he also greatly commended charity. M. Dubessé, having finished his discourse, published five banns, and performed five marriages. M. Dubessé performed the marriage ceremonies from his temporary pulpit, near to which the parties approached. He then announced that, in a little while, he would administer the holy sacrament, as soon as he found them a little better instructed, and he told them in a loud and distinct voice to sing the 117th Psalm, and, having himself intoned it, all responded; and

the said psalm having been sung, the said M. Dubessé promptly threw off his robe, descended from his pulpit, and disappeared, having plunged into the crowd of persons surrounding him in said assemblage, and fled, passing with a multitude of people into the warren of Mornac: thus we were enabled to know the location of his retreat. This assemblage, having begun about ten o'clock in the evening, ended about two in the morning, etc.; of which and all of which we have prepared the present report, for whatever value or use it may rightly have, and have the same sent to M. de Montfayon, our Inspector, to be by him sent to Monseigneur the Intendant of La Rochelle, that he may act in regard to it as he may see fit.

"La Tremblade, this 12th of July, 1750."

Incited by this information, the Inspector of King's farms commenced search for the preacher, who had disappeared in the warren of Mornac; and, on the 25th of July following, made report of the result of his doings to the Intendant, as follows: —

"I had notice last Sunday, 19th inst., that the preacher was at Mornac; that he ordinarily lodged and slept by turns at the houses of a man named Frouin, an inn-keeper, the Demoiselle Amian, living in a plain way, and the Widow Ravart, a shop-keeper, all residents of the said place, Mornac. I instantly sent a messenger to Marennes to inform M. Lortie-Dumaine about it, and to ask his advice and assistance. He accordingly did me the honor to write me a letter of instructions, and sent me two horsemen from the constabulary, the others being occupied elsewhere. These horsemen reached La Tremblade at eight o'clock in the evening. I at once called out two gangs which I have at La Tremblade, composed of ten men, and, besides, three guards of this place, and the two horsemen from the constabulary. I mounted my horse at nine o'clock, and put myself at the head of this company. I conducted it to the bridge of La Maire, a league and a half from La Tremblade, where I ordered it to await me: then I went to the villages of Avallon, Chatresac,

and Chaillevette, to arouse the *employés* at those stations, and take them with me, which was promptly done. This latter number was composed of nine men, viz. the crew of the tender at Chatresac, consisting of six men and three guards, the whole being under my inspection. I conducted this latter party to join the other, awaiting me at the bridge of La Maire. I then proceeded with the entire force to Mornac, causing profound silence to be observed. We reached there between midnight and one o'clock. I picked up also in this place two more guards, employed under my inspection. Then I had the house of the man named Frouin, the inn-keeper, surrounded. I entered this house with eight men, and caused thorough search to be made. Finding nothing there of that which I sought, I went to the houses of Madame Ravart and Mademoiselle Amian, which I had already had surrounded, and where I went through the same performance; but I did not find there either what I wanted: the birds had flown.

"My spies had also given me notice that I might find the preacher's pulpit in the village of Coulanges, or Brandes, about half a league distant from Mornac. It was between these two villages that the largely attended meeting had been held on the night of the 11–12th of this month; I proceeded with my entire party to make the requisite search in this matter, but uselessly. Then I proceeded with my force to the village of Avallon, to the house of M. Derideau, Jr., salt-merchant, where I had been assured I would find the gown, band, and square cap of the preacher. Here also thorough search was made, but again without result." (C, 139.)

VII.

Not only did these assemblages in the wilderness take place, but, in addition, registers of baptisms and marriages were kept, which were deposited in safe hands, to be referred to when needed. Here are specimens of the certificates, gratuitously issued: —

CERTIFICATES OF BAPTISM.

"We, the undersigned, certify that on the 6th of August, 1754, we have baptized Elie, the lawful son of Elie Bertin and Madeleine Villeur, of the village of Auriaux, parish of Chailvette in Saintonge, born the 27th of July last; the names of those presenting him in holy baptism, as well as of the witnesses, are stated and signed in our register.

Signed, "GIBERT, *Pastor*."

"We, the undersigned, certify that on the 6th of August, 1754, we have baptized Elie, the lawful son of Pierre Bobin and Marie Lortin, of the village of Maine-Auriau, parish of Chailvette in Saintonge, born the 3d of said month. The names of those presenting him in holy baptism, as well as of the witnesses, are stated and signed in our register.

Signed, "GIBERT, *Pastor*."

CERTIFICATES OF MARRIAGE.

[Stamp of the Généralité (district) of La Rochelle.]

"We, the undersigned, certify that on the 18th of July, 1752, we have blessed the marriage of Jean Boujut (lawful son of the late Jean Boujut, and of Jeanne Durassier, of the city of Jarnac-Charente) with Jeanne Gentil (lawful daughter of the late Jacques Gentil and of Jeanne Masson, of La Mirolle, parish of Segonzac, diocese of Saintes), according to the customary form of our churches, there being no civil or canonical hindrance thereto, to us apparent, in presence of a sufficient number of witnesses, as moreover appears from our register.

Signed, "GIBERT, *Pastor*."

"I, the undersigned, declare, to all whom it may concern, that on the 22d of May, 1748, I have blessed, according to the customary forms of our holy religion, the marriage of Mathieu Reynaud, lawful son of the late Pierre and of Suzanne Reynaud, of Sainte-Foy, with Marie Robert, also lawful daughter of the late Jacques Robert and the Demoiselle Marie Texier, all of the parish of La Tremblade, diocese of Saintes. Record made

by Master Gardat, royal notary, on the 15th of February last. In witness of which I have signed and given the present certificate, a faithful extract from the register, to serve when need may be. In the wilderness, in presence of witnesses.

Signed, "PELLISSIER,
Minister of the Holy Gospel."

The authorities did not confine themselves to sending to prison or the galleys those who had attended meetings in the wilderness, or who had had their marriage blessed there; their rigors extended to all those who made profession of being Protestants. Thus, in 1733, a young woman named Hivonnette, of La Rochelle, was incarcerated solely on account of her religion, and was designated as "headstrong" because she was unwilling to renounce the faith of the Reformation. Others were detained for the same reason in our city prisons. There were as many as twenty-seven counted in a single month, the minutes of their examinations mentioning no other cause for their arrest than that of professing Protestantism; a cause which they all readily admitted, adding that the authorities might do what they would to them, but they were resolved to live and die in that faith.

VIII.

In consequence of a prayer-meeting at which he had presided on the 10th of July, Elie Vivien, a shoemaker at Marennes, an old man of seventy-eight years, was condemned, by sentence of Intendant Barentin, to be hung on the public square at La Rochelle, after having made public retraction, and his body to be hanged on

the gallows, there to remain until entirely decomposed. The sentence was executed on the same day. Louis André, who had called the meeting, was condemned to accompany Vivien when he made the *amende honorable* and to witness his execution, to be branded and marked by the executioner of high justice with a hot iron, forming the letters G. A. L., and conducted to the chain-gang, to be thereto attached and to serve his Majesty as a convict in the galleys for life. Later, we find Protestant books seized by the constabulary at Bourgneuf, in the environs of La Rochelle, and on May 7, 1751, one Jean Trouillet[1] was condemned to service in the galleys for life for having held Protestant assemblages in Saintonge; which, however, did not prevent a continuance of the prayer-meetings, without the authorities succeeding in laying hands upon ministers Gounon (called Pradon) and Dubessé.

Pastor Gibert, who also presided over religious assemblages in Saintonge, was especially hated by the Catholic clergy. After trying every means to capture him, resort was had to a *ruse* which was scarcely honorable. The Bishop of Saintes sent to Pons a man named Syntier, who pretended to be a Protestant, and endeavored to entice the preacher of the wilderness to his house, under pretext of baptizing his child. Notwithstanding the little confidence which Syntier inspired, Gibert, urged by the Reformers of Pons, answered his

[1] Intendant Barentin had condemned to similar penalties, on the 17th of December, 1738, François Touzineau, preacher, and his three associates; and on the 24th of July, 1744, Joseph Bretagne, called "the Englishman," (accused of having several times disguised himself, of having blasphemed the Catholic religion, and *strongly suspected* of having filled the office of preacher,) and Jacques Bourdron, his associate.

call, accompanied by the Chevalier Belrieu de la Grace. But hardly had they gone a quarter of a league on the day following the ceremony, when they were pursued by archers, and a gun-shot killed the gentleman, whose corpse remained in the hands of the constabulary. The three other persons who had accompanied Gibert on this perilous trip, viz. his brother Etienne, Gentelot, and André Bonfils, succeeded in escaping, thanks to the fleetness of their horses. On the 14th of July, 1756, Intendant Baillon [1] of La Rochelle sentenced Minister Gibert *in contumaciam* to make public retraction, to see his sermons burned in his own presence by the executioner, and to be hanged; Etienne, his reader, to service in the galleys for life; and Gentelot, who had threatened the constabulary with his pistol, to the same penalty. The memoir of Chevalier de la Grace was suppressed, and Bonfils was banished. None of them having been captured, Gibert was executed in effigy, with another minister by the name of Guérin. In view of these continual severities, the pastors were obliged to act with the utmost precaution. They pretended to be travelling on business, selling children's blankets and garments for young married people.[2]

[1] "Jean Baillon [*Baillon* signifies "gag"], ominous name, and in this case well bestowed," says M. Eugene Pelletan, "had the honor, in our provinces, of administering the last blow of persecution. He closes up the list of all these small fry Basvilles, who arrested and imprisoned men and women suspected of Calvinism, at the least gesture, the slightest denunciation from the clergy." — *Le Pasteur du Désert*, corroborative documents.

[2] *Ancien Inventaire Protestant*, B, n. 10. *Archives du Consistoire.*

IX.

In the midst of the hindrances and perils surrounding every religious act performed outside the Catholic Church, the Protestants of La Rochelle often profited by the presence of Dutch vessels in the harbor to have their children baptized, and their marriages blessed by the chaplain on board, who would deliver the parties a certificate in due form. Sometimes, too, they went to Paris, to the chapel of the embassy of some Protestant nation, where the chaplain would perform the religious ceremonies in the presence of the members of the legation.[1]

A fact not less remarkable, and which attests the Reformers' profound attachment for evangelical worship and their unconquerable aversion to the worship of their persecutors, was the existence of religious assemblages of another kind, an account of which has been transmitted to us by M. E. Pelletan in the *Pasteur du Désert*. They were held on the open sea, while the constabulary were beating up the country to surprise the preachers. Scarcely was the vessel out of sight of land when her sails were dropped, her hatchways opened, and the faithful, who had been hidden in the hold, came upon deck, where Pastor Jarousseau intoned a psalm, and the sermon was listened to thoughtfully. Similar scenes appear to have taken place all along the coast.

But the severities against Protestants still continued. Jean Raveau, Jacques Robin, Jean David, Jean Renard, and Jean Clair had been imprisoned at La Rochelle by order of Intendant Boisemont, who had inflicted se-

[1] Notes of M. E. Jourdan. Family papers of M. Fleurian.

vere treatment upon them on account of their persistency in attending religious meetings. Set free, March 31, 1755, upon condition that they would thenceforth conform to the King's commands, they were soon replaced by other prisoners accused of the same crime. In the month of July, 1756, twenty-three Protestants of Saintonge came before the Seneschal of La Rochelle apprehended on religious grounds. Amongst them was Jean Mesnard of Marennes, who defended his faith and his conduct with much moderation and firmness.

Accused of having helped to set up a temple at Arthouan,[1] he was arrested in the month of November with his fellow-Protestant, Guillon: taken together to Brouage, they were handcuffed, and shut up in a cell, where they remained until the month of March in the following year. Conducted to the La Rochelle prison, still handcuffed, put into solitary confinement on arrival, with irons on their feet during the trial, they underwent several examinations, as the result of which they were, on the 21st of July, sentenced, Mesnard to perpetual banishment from the kingdom, and confiscation of half his property; Guillon, to three years' banishment from the district, and a fine. Jeanne Amian[2] was shorn, and shut up in the convent of La Providence de Saint-Joseph, and Graveau to be branded, to service in the galleys for life, and to confiscation of half his property. The sentence was promptly executed in regard to the latter, who was led into the public square to be branded by the

[1] This temple was not strictly an edifice, but a barn in which chairs and benches had been placed.

[2] Having taken refuge in England, and remained Protestant, the Amian family occupies a very high position in that country at the present day.

executioner, "with irons on his feet on the way, and carrying a cross-bar two feet long, which greatly embarrassed him." "And," says the manuscript from which these details are borrowed, "the affair being finished, and he having returned to prison, we all with one accord thanked God, and read the fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, wherein it saith that they were filled with joy that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus Christ. We read also the fifty-eighth Psalm, appropriate to our situation: —

'Malheureux juges que vous êtes,
Répondez-nous de bonne foi:
Prononcez-vous selon la loi?
Est-ce bien le droit que vous faites?'"

While these captives were being thus treated, the wife of one of them, aged about eighteen years, gave a touching instance of conjugal affection. She went about unceasingly in all kinds of weather, exposed to rain, wind, cold, heat, burdened with the care of two young children, having no income nor fortune, never weary of importuning friends to carry comfort to her husband in his sufferings, and putting all her consolation in the Lord's mercy. Her devotion was crowned with success, and Mesnard did not leave the kingdom. After two years of contention, he was released upon paying costs of 453 pounds, 9 sols, and 6 deniers, and the value of half his house and of a quarter of his furniture and effects.

X.

There exists in the La Rochelle Library a manuscript quoted as No. 2098, containing one of the most affecting pages from the history of the Church under the Cross. We refer to the avowal made at La Rochelle by a Saintonge woman, accompanied by forty-five other women from her province, on the 9th of April, 1699. We give this examination as published by the *Témoin de la Vérité*, a very estimable religious paper, now discontinued.[1]

"Tuesday morning, I, accompanied by forty-five women, was led by God's grace to the house of Monseigneur the Intendant. After asking his indulgence, he not being willing to accord it, we were sent to M. Grissot (magistrate of the Presidial Court), who took us to the Bishop,[2] whom we found in company with the gentlemen of the Presidial Court, the Criminal Lieutenant and King's Attorney, and several other persons, not to forget two Jesuits in the company of all these great gentlemen. I made a confession of faith, as Jesus Christ himself says, 'When ye shall be brought before the rulers of the earth, trouble not yourselves as to what ye shall answer, for my Spirit will make answer for you.' Jesus, speaking through me, as he himself says, 'Whoso shall confess me before men, him also will I confess before my Father which is in heaven.' After we had asked his pardon several times, the Bishop said we should go to mass; that he was the good shepherd.

"*Woman.* I said to him that I did not want to go to mass; after having tasted the milk of knowledge which is without deception, I do not wish to taste any other. You tell me that you

[1] While this work was in press, the document in question, published in 1864 for the first time, in the *Témoin de la Vérité*, was reproduced in the number of the *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, for the 15th of January, 1870, communicated by M. E. Jourdan.

[2] De Frézeau de la Frézelière, former colonel of cavalry, Bishop of La Rochelle in 1699.

are the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. He does not suffer us to be torn as you do, and you yourself are the instrument of all these things.

"*Bishop.* Your religion has existed only for one hundred and thirty years. Calvin made it, and, if you obey his church, you are damned.

"*Woman.* Pardon me if your highness permits me to say that our religion is older than yours. It takes its origin from the foundation of the world; the prophets proclaimed it; Jesus Christ brought it from heaven; the apostles preached it; the martyrs sealed it with their blood. Your highness says Calvin made our religion. Calvin is not heard of in our meetings. We have not been baptized in the name of Calvin; he was not crucified for us; he did not come into the world to prepare a place for us.

"*Bishop.* Where is your church, where are your pastors, your leaders, as St. Paul says, where are your bishops? You are in confusion, without pastors, without churches, without sacrifices.

"*Woman.* It is the gathering of the faithful; each faithful one constitutes a pastor of the Church. Jesus Christ is the head; we are its members. This poor church, which has always been afflicted, will continue to be so until the Son of Man's coming. You ask me, 'Where are your pastors?' when they have been taken from us, and we are without any. We have Jesus Christ, who is the great Pastor of our souls. I beg pardon of your highness; we are not in confusion; we pray to God with our whole heart; we have that Divine Spirit, which is the true Comforter of our souls, and which makes us cry out, 'Abba, Father.' He himself says, 'My son, give me thine heart.'

"*Bishop.* Where are your altars?

"*Woman.* I beg pardon of your highness. Jesus Christ was crucified once. Sacrifice cannot be made without shedding of blood.

"*Bishop.* There ought to be a scourge of thongs to chastise you and make you abandon this cursed religion. Such a good

King, who calls you with so much gentleness! You are rebels against your King.

"*Woman.* Several of the temples where prayer was formerly made to God, where so many ministers served him with so much respect, are to-day places of traffic. It would be more proper that Jesus Christ should come down from heaven, and that the Holy Spirit should make the thongs. He would say, 'My house ye have made a den of thieves.' Sir, I beg pardon of your highness: you say you will make us abandon our religion: it is not accursed; it is God's Church, which he has purchased and which he has redeemed at such great cost by the death and passion of his dear Son, Jesus Christ, who suffered death and shed his precious blood to ransom us from the cruel death to which we were liable in the lineage of Adam.

"*The King's Attorney* (*interrupting*). Do you believe that Messrs. du B——, and several others whose names are not written, have not as much trust as you have? They have come into the lap of the Church, and do their duty better than you.

"*Woman.* Sir, I beg you to tell me where in the world it is said, 'I come to cast myself into the lap of the Roman Church to find there my salvation'; for some have done so for favor, some for greatness, others for eminent positions, and others for money.

"*Bishop.* They are offered inducements to bring them into the Church, to the Catholic faith. Do you think to know more than your pastors, who have known the real facts of their change? But, after all, there are none but this little self-opinionated class of people who rebel against the Catholic faith.

"*Woman.* Sir, I ask pardon. Real religion is not bought for money, as St. Peter says. When he laid hands on the apostles, the gift of the Holy Spirit was given them. Simon the sorcerer thought that gold and silver were offered to St. Peter. You say, sir, that, though we are a class of people few in numbers, we are self-opinionated and rebellious; but we are not so against evangelical truth. It is that which leads us heavenward by the faith we have in Christ Jesus. You say, sir, that our pastors have misled us, as it is said in the Gospel that the stars

will fall from the sky, and the very powers of heaven be shaken. God knows his own. You say, sir, that they threw themselves into your arms: for the reason that they have once known the truth, it is impossible that they should have left and abandoned it.

"*Bishop.* She wants to be wiser than the ministers who were men of wisdom, who in my time came to mass at Paris, and who were learned doctors of divinity who had acknowledged their errors, and the truth of the Roman Church.

"*Woman.* Your highness will permit me to remark that Pontius Pilate, Herod, and Felix were instructed in rhetoric, philosophy, and every good science. But they crucified Jesus, who made himself known to the poor fishermen who had no science, and hid holy things from the wise and prudent to reveal them unto babes; as himself hath said, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved.' Your highness is deceived. There is no heresy in our religion; it is the refinement of heaven's work; it is evangelical truth. Our religion is clearer than the noonday sun, however afflicted it may be by the enemies of our salvation.

"*Bishop.* I tell you that outside the Church there is no salvation. Come, then, to the perfect religion. A King calls you with so much gentleness; throw yourself into your Bishop's arms, and God and the King have given me full power to do for you what his council has ordained. You do not pray to God; you are as it were in confusion, for you are only a handful of people among all that are in the world.

"*Woman.* Sir, I acknowledge to your highness that 'outside the Church there is no salvation.' This Church has two parts: the one is triumphant, the other is militant on earth. The great apostle, St. Paul, who received thirty-nine lashes with a scourge under the Roman empire, — he was forbidden with threats to utter the name of Jesus Christ. That great apostle replied, 'Obey God rather than men.' All sufferings here below are nothing in comparison with the glory of God, who has made ready for us above in heaven the crown of glory. Sir, do you want me to tell you why our Church on earth is few in numbers? It is by reason of the afflictions which go with it, even

to the end of the world; but it will triumph in heaven, and will overcome the enemies who have afflicted it here below, with those who have suffered with it, and who have fought the good fight. They will have the crown of life which has been made ready for them from the foundation of the world. The Church herself says, 'I am small because of the afflictions that go with me.' But the haughty one says, 'I am queen, and shall see no grief,' because she holds the cup of God's wrath in her hand, to pour it upon those who are subject unto her, who have worshipped the beast with her.

"*Bishop.* What do you mean by talking of this haughty Church, this Babylon holding the cup of God's wrath in her hand, to pour it out upon those who have not served God? Give me the explanation of that. (*Getting into a great rage, and stamping his feet three times, he added:*) And tell me whether our King is damned.

"*Woman.* Sir, I ask your highness's pardon. You ask whether we believe our King is damned. It is to entrap us in our words, as the Roman soldiers did our Lord Jesus Christ. Did we believe such a thing of our King, we should merit death; but before God, we all, as many as there are of us, pray to God, night and morning, for him: there is no one who fears God that does not do the same thing.

"*Bishop.* What do you say? You are but a small number compared with us. I am sorry for the evils that are in store for you. I beg you, come to church and hear the Gospel.

"*Woman.* I ask your highness's pardon. Under the reign of Ahab, the prophet Elijah was hidden in the desert, and made his prayer to the Eternal: 'Lord, they have thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.' The answer came to him from heaven: 'Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.'

"*Bishop.* We have read the Holy Fathers of the Church, viz. St. Jerome, St. Athanasius, St. Stephen, St. Augustine, and several others, who have written against your religion; they

portray it as a Reformation made entirely by man's hand, — the work of a John Huss, a Bèze, a Calvin. Here is a nice religion made by men's hands!

"*Woman.* Sir, after having read the Bible twenty-four times, I also read the holy Fathers of the Church of whom you speak. Your religion is as far removed from Holy Scripture as the east is from the west. We walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. I do not doubt that your highness has read the books of ——, in which are included the works of M. Arnaud, doctor of theology, who, in those he wrote last, says in proper terms to the great Bishop of Germany: 'Had I all the writings and books against the members of the Pretended Reformed Religion, improperly so called, I would have them burned, for I have written some against my own conscience, and I ask God's pardon for it, with all my heart.' You talk to me of John Huss, of Bèze, and of Calvin. It is true that these persons (and I praise God for it) have been the instruments whom God has used, by means of their eloquence, to call people to a knowledge of him. What must have been Calvin's influence, as well as that of the others, who made the earth tremble and dethroned the Pope from his seat? It appears so to-day, by reason of several persons who suffer for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"*Bishop.* Have you their edicts, their decrees?

"*Woman.* I have not got them, sir.

"*Bishop.* In the end see what a thunderbolt and what a tempest are going to fall upon your heads.

"*Woman.* I ask your highness's pardon; we shall suffer no more evil than God has told us in his counsel. He himself says: 'They shall say evil things of you, and put you to death, thinking they are doing God service.' And Jesus Christ himself says: 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Whosoever shall persevere unto the end, I will give him the crown of life.' May God give us grace to conquer with him! Amen."

If M. de la Frézelière was strong in matters of controversy, he did not show it on this occasion. One is

surprised to find a noble prelate offering menaces and haughty expressions, or setting traps for his opponent by asking her whether she believed the King was damned, instead of winning her by gentleness, and convincing her by good reasonings. It seems to us beneath the dignity and sphere of a bishop. The advantage in this controversy, as well in form as in subject-matter, rests then with a poor woman, illiterate and devoid of experience.

What was the sequel to this dialogue? and, when she went out from before the first magistrate of the province,[1] what became of the faithful servant of Jesus Christ, who had so well borne witness to the truth? This is what the manuscript does not inform us. But, in glancing at the legislation of that period, it is permitted us to suppose that she was shorn and shut up in a convent, whence she never emerged; it may be in one of the hospitals of La Rochelle, as was the case in 1748 with some other women from Royan, whose sole crime consisted in having attended prayer-meetings.

XI.

While the Saintonge Protestants were the object of these severities, those of La Rochelle were enjoying comparative tolerance. They took advantage of it to draw closer the ties uniting them, and to organize a church body. The attempted assassination of the King at this period furnished the people of La Rochelle, the province of Aunis, and the adjacent islands, an oppor-

[1] Michel Bégon, Intendant of the Généralité of La Rochelle, established in 1694.

tunity to write his Majesty a letter, in which, after having borne witness to the horror such a crime had inspired in their minds, they prayed for some alleviation of their existing ills, and a recognition of their marriages. In the month of March, 1755, deliberation was had as to the proper measures to be taken to organize under a constitution, and Pastor Jean Pajon was called to fill the office of the holy ministry with a salary of 3,000 livres, which was to be paid him by the faithful. A Consistory, composed of twelve, afterwards fourteen lay members, was organized under the name of a "Committee." As the times were still critical, it was agreed to meet in parties of twenty persons, in private houses, so as not to bring upon the ministers the severities of the law. All those who attended were to preserve absolute secrecy, even with the members of their own families. This code of regulations, containing seventy-four articles, was revised in October, 1761, and on the 10th of November following there were opened baptismal and marriage registers, wherein up to 1766 only the pastor's signature occurred. Dating from that period deaths were registered side by side with baptisms and marriages; and afterwards, upon a special register, opened August 2, 1781, for those "to whom ecclesiastical burial is not accorded." This register was signed in initials by the Lieutenant of Police, and two witnesses signed the declaration, without any minister's name appearing thereupon. Occasionally, too, the identity of the deceased was established by a notary, and the remains were deposited, sometimes on his own premises, sometimes in the garden set apart for that purpose, being a portion of the former Protestant church site.

Or, again, the curé drew up the document, and performed burial services after the Catholic form in the parish cemetery.[1]

Moreover, the La Rochelle Protestants enjoyed in this regard a considerable degree of liberty, for from 1687 to 1789 their interments were kept up in the Ville Neuve garden, or on private property, which proves that the local authorities, and even the clergy, closed their eyes upon these burials, which could hardly be considered canonical.[2]

In the month of September, 1757, an English fleet having taken possession of the Isle of Aix, with the intention of attacking Rochefort, the people of La Rochelle, men, women, and children, without distinction of religion or fortune, took up arms to repel the assailants. This vigorous demonstration made the English stop and reflect; they did not dare to carry out their project of making a descent, and a few days later withdrew. The conduct of the Protestant population, who on this occasion did not hesitate in taking up arms against the enemies of France, made the local authorities very favorably disposed toward them, and the King himself, being informed of their devotion, caused the removal and destruction of the insulting inscriptions which Intendant De Muin had had the harshness to have engraved over the door of the Church of the Minime Fathers. This was done with great solemnity on the 27th of November.

[1] *La Rochelle Protestante*, p. 85. [2] *Ibid.*

XII.

But the Reformers did not despair of the future, and sought to strengthen the organization they had effected. While a Provincial Synod of Saintonge, Angoumois, and Perigord was in session at Bordeaux, Paul Rabaud and Paul Vincent addressed to their fellow-Protestants a pressing exhortation to be firm in profession of the truth, and during the early days of February, 1766, the Aunis Protestants received a letter from their brethren in the faith, inviting them to hold a solemn fast of humiliation and prayer on Sunday, the 23d of said month. After the perils and trials which had just been passed, life seemed to revive in the Church, and its members experienced the necessity of seeking strength in prayer and fasting, according to the commands of the Gospel and the custom of all holy men.

As the hope of better days began to dawn in the hearts of the Reformers, it was proposed that a special subject for prayer should be "the restoration of spiritual privileges and freedom of worship." They knew too well that deliverance comes from the Eternal, not to resort to this supreme source of all grace. Nevertheless, no recrimination, no complaint, was heard against those who sought to bring them back by force under the Pope's yoke, and the persecutions they had suffered were looked upon as a chastisement from the Lord. "Had we been more attached to our holy religion," say they, "more firm in our principles, more consistent in our conduct, certainly the Eternal would have been propitious to us; certainly the best of kings would have added to the benefits of his reign the favors with which he might have supplied us."

The exercise of the evangelical ministry continued thenceforth without hindrance in the city. Under date of May 23, 1766, appears upon the registers of the civil list the signature of "J. Jay, minister of the Holy Gospel, and pastor of the Reformed Church of La Rochelle."

The Marshal of Senneterre[1] is indisputably the governor with whom the Protestants of La Rochelle have had best reason to be satisfied: he alleviated their condition by the spirit of justice and kindness with which he showed himself constantly animated regarding them, and his acts are in contrast with those of most of his predecessors. And the Reformers were not insensible to the benefits of his administration. One finds the expression of their sentiments in a "Collection of Prayers for the Sabbath-Day, in use by Protestants of the Province of Aunis," in which occurs an impassioned invocation for "M. the Marshal of Senneterre, our governor and our commander, an aged man as venerable by his virtues as by his whitened locks, and one who by his gentleness, by his love for peace and order, and by the spirit of toleration which animates him, so thoroughly justifies the confidence with which our monarch honors him, ... and grows more and more precious to those living under his government."

It may thus be seen what might have been obtained from the Protestants if, instead of oppressing them by Draconian measures, and hunting them like wild beasts, just and humane men had been sent to govern them. Unhappily this experience came late, and M. de Senne-

[1] The Literary Society of La Rochelle published, in 1855, *L'Eloge* of Jean Charles, Marquis of Senneterre, Governor of Saintonge and Aunis from 1755 to 1771, by P. Gervaud.

terre was one of the last governors of La Rochelle. He died on the 23d of January, 1771, aged eighty-five years, and the French Revolution shortly afterward inaugurated another *régime*.

This same year, 1768, there was published by M. Dangirard an edition of the Psalms of David, which was subscribed to by the La Rochelle Protestants, and which was employed in their worship by several Saintonge churches. The versification of our Psalms in many cases leaves much to be desired, and is open to great improvement; but the changes made by M. Dangirard were not in all cases happy ones, and, notwithstanding the excellence of his intentions, his work has never been adopted in other churches, and it is gradually disappearing from those of Saintonge.

XIII.

The Intendant of La Rochelle, who, at this period, was occupied in preparing statistics of his district, was requested by ministerial letter to endeavor to obtain, by way "of insinuation and confidence," exact data in regard to the civil status of the Protestants in 1773, by addressing for that purpose the principal members of that faith; "for their ministers," says the letter, "accurately keep two registers of births, marriages, and deaths, one of which they retain, and the other of which they deposit with one of the elders of the Consistory."

Moreover, nothing can give a more accurate idea of the situation of the La Rochelle Protestants, and the progress of tolerance at the time we mention, than the

following letter, written by M. Jean Perry,[1] on the 22d of December, 1767, to one of his fellow-Protestants, Samuel-Pierre Meschinet de Richemond, then at Hamburg.[2]

"We enjoy, thanks to God, the greatest tranquillity, and for seven or eight months past have about twenty houses in the city where we assemble on Sundays, morning and evening, for the reading of the word of God, sermon, and psalm-singing, as freely as at Amsterdam. The pastor goes by turns to each gathering composed of fifty, sixty, or eighty persons, and everything passes off the best in the world (*tout s'y passe le mieux du monde*). The clergy and the public seem to get accustomed to it, and that is probably what the court wants. We are no longer troubled about the baptism of our children, and indeed in this respect we can say we have never been, from the very beginning, as there was reason to fear. We daily perceive some advance in the support accorded us. In general, the government's way of thinking about us is very much changed, and we feel it is more and more favorable. The martyrdom of the just Calas has greatly advanced the conversion of many who were intoler-

[1] Jean Perry, born at Montault, in Agénois, in 1726, came to settle in La Rochelle to engage in business, and there married, in 1752, Marguerite Meschinet de Richemond, by whom he had three daughters, married, 1st, to Pierre-Marie Déhault de Pressensé, principal treasurer of war at La Rochelle, grandfather of the Pastor Edmond de Pressensé; 2d, to Jean Joseph Alauzet, director of customs; and, 3d, to Jean de Fabry, captain and chevalier of the Order of Military Merit. Perry was successively Syndic of the Chamber of Commerce in 1771 and in 1784, was director of the same from 1787 to 1789, municipal officer in 1790, administrator of the district of La Rochelle in September, 1791, a member of the district directory (October 25th); he kept his seat until 1793, and died December 9th, 1797. Some interesting notes in regard to the history of La Rochelle are due to his pen.

[2] A shipping merchant, member of the Board of Commerce and the Agricultural Society; he died in 1807, leaving two daughters and a son (1783–1868), who became captain of a corvette, chevalier of the Orders of Military Merit and of the Legion of Honor, and a member of the Consistory.

ant. The troubles of the Gallican Church, which has come to blows with the Molinists and the Jansenists, all that is taking place in Russia and Poland, perhaps even the necessities of the state itself, are among the causes of the tranquillity we are enjoying. The Protestants of the neighboring provinces, Saintonge and Poitou, are as tranquil as we are. Those of the former hold regular service in their temples, while the pastors are recognized as such by the priests of the dominant religion, and enjoy the greatest liberty. In Poitou, they meet in the country to the number of three or four hundred souls, to pray to God."

The calm they were enjoying permitted the La Rochelle Protestants to call Pastor Bétrine, who received his call from the Church in 1775. Encouraged by the disposition of the government, which inclined to tolerance, these same Protestants addressed a petition to Louis XVI., imploring his kindness "in behalf of subjects who were faithful, and yet excluded from the rank of citizens, and deprived of almost all the rights of natives." "When Louis XIV. outlawed them," added they, "those of his own faith were as much surprised as his orders were exceeded ; a fact which he himself recognized, by enjoining toleration upon his heir presumptive." This petition, among other signatures, bore those of Fleuriau, Bouguereau, Carayon, Jean Perry, Chapron, De Jarnac, Ranson, Garreau, Giraudeau, Lepage, De Tandebaratz, Rasteau, Charruyer, De Richemond, and Bétrine, who did not assume the title of pastor.

XIV.

The days so long desired by Protestants seemed at last come, and their relations with the superior authorities assumed that character of fairness and moderation

which they should always have borne. In 1776, M. de Maleshcrbes, while advising the Intendant of La Rochelle to reason cautiously with the Protestants "that the public practice of their religion is not yet permitted them," reminded the curés (who, in virtue of the fourth article of the Declaration of May 14, 1724, were to baptize the children of Protestants) that they had no right to register them as illegitimate children upon the sole ground of their having been born of parents of the R. P. R.

In his reply to these instructions, M. de Reverseaux declared to the ministry that throughout the entire district Protestants were in the habit of assembling to pray together; at La Rochelle these little assemblages are held by permission of the commandant (M. de Senneterre). "They conduct themselves prudently," adds the Intendant, "and seem to appreciate the kindness with which the government is treating them. . . . . The wealthier Protestants of La Rochelle no longer fear to invest their funds in the purchase of land, and some are exclusively engaged in the culture of these lands. They now are looking to being allowed some stable form of marriage, which our civil and canonical laws can recognize." (C, 140.)

Enjoying greater freedom, the Protestant Rochelais, in 1784, interested themselves to acquire a suitable place for holding the worship to which they had remained faithful. This was first a storehouse opposite the basin; afterwards the former tennis-court of La Verdière, which they bought (March 20th), and fitted up at their own expense, for its new purposes. Inventory No. 54 names 9,000 livres as the sum they expended for these repairs.

According to official statements made on the 25th of February to Intendant Reverseaux, there were two hundred and sixty-two deceased persons who had not been interred by the Roman Church, and two hundred and thirty infants who had not been baptized after the Catholic form in the city of La Rochelle, during the space of eleven years, from 1773 to 1783, which indicates quite a considerable Protestant population.

After long and cruel persecutions, a new era was about to begin for the Reformers.

Baron de Breteuil, minister of the King's household, presented to Louis XVI. in the month of October, 1786, "A general report on the condition of Calvinists in France, on the causes of this condition, and on the means of remedy therefor." Then he caused to be edited by his secretary, the Academician De Rulhières, the *Éclaircissements historiques sur les Causes de la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes, et sur l'État des Protestants en France, depuis le Commencement du Règne de Louis XIV.*, drawn from various governmental archives.

The edict of November, 1787, signed by Louis XVI., rendered their existence legal, that is to say, gave them the right to live in France, and to practise their professions or trades without any trouble in regard to their religion ; also permission to legally marry before officers of justice, authority to have the birth of their children recorded before the local judge, and a regulation in regard to burials. From that time, profession of Protestantism was no longer a crime or a fault in the eyes of the law. Tolerance existed, but not yet liberty. In spite of its short-comings, the edict of Louis XVI. was received with joy by the Reformers, and brought con-

solation to their hearts. Their religious assemblies resounded with hymns of thankfulness on this subject. At La Rochelle and elsewhere, they hastened to have their marriages and the births of their children legalized. Even old men were to be seen registering their own marriages side by side with those of their children and grandchildren.

Whatever might have been its restrictions in regard to liberty, the edict of tolerance found no favor with M. de Crussol, Bishop of La Rochelle, who, although descended from a Protestant family, thought it his duty to formulate his opposition in a special mandate. But this protest was blamed by the Catholics themselves, notably by Father Tabaraud, Superior of the Oratory, who published on this subject, *Les Lettres d'un Théologien à Messieurs les Curés et Monseigneur l'Évêque.* The civil authority itself was not insensible to this episcopal manifesto, and the King's Attorney, Alquier, took official notice of the Bishop's ill-timed letter.

It is a remarkable fact, that in 1789, after two centuries of intolerance, the Reformers of La Rochelle had lost none of their intellectual and moral resources, none of their industrial power, and none of their influence in the city.[1]

[1] From 1790 on, Rochelais Protestantism is represented by the most honorable and highly esteemed names. It claims among the deputies, Messrs. Admyrauld, Dechezeaux, De Missy, Dumoustier, Fleuriau de Bellevue, André Gallot, Majou, Rasteau, etc. In the navy and army, in commerce and science and literature, it has furnished in proportion to its numbers a harvest none the less fruitful in notable men. The list of members of the Consistory is singularly characteristic, and the preponderance of Protestants in the councils of the city significant, during the Empire and the Restoration. If since that period the number has decreased, and undergone constant modifications, the reason must be sought for in the variations of the manner of holding elections, and in an order of ideas altogether foreign to this sketch.

XV.

Hardly had the edict of tolerance been two years in force, when the Constituent Assembly, overthrowing the barriers which arrested the coming of liberty, proclaimed the rights of man and the citizen, and gave Reformers access to all the offices in the gift of the state.

It does not enter into our plan to show how the disagreement between facts and theories broke out, and how great progress was purchased by means of great misfortunes. It is ours neither to outline nor to judge the French Republic, not even to point out its reaction at La Rochelle. But, at all events, it is impossible to remain silent in regard to the fact, that the Protestants, victims as they were of the outrages of the former system of government, hailed with enthusiasm a movement for redress, applauded the decisions of the Constituent Assembly, and sustained its action in their city.[1]

[1] The summary of complaints of the Third Estate of La Rochelle (March 2–4, 1789) expresses the conviction that, in all the colleges, the students were ceasing to be indiscriminately subject to the Catholic religion, and that, accordingly, Protestant children were no longer obliged to go out of the kingdom to seek instruction in conformity with their consciences, as had been the case with forty-two young men from the city of La Rochelle alone. We have before us forty-three letters (1764–1776) addressed to M. Jean Ranson by the Banneret Samuel Frederic Ostervald, a distinguished Hebraic scholar, placed at the head of the College of Neufchatel, and of the Typographical Society, who brought up a great number of young Rochelais boarding-scholars, between eight and fourteen years of age, gave them a liberal education, and brought them to their first communion. The Third Estate of La Rochelle claimed also universal tolerance, the restitution of the property of those who had become fugitives on account of their religion, and the admission of non-Catholic French officers into the Order of Military Merit, the cross of which had been limited to Protestant foreigners only in the service of France.

Several of them belonged to the Society of Friends of the Constitution; but all held aloof when the rising flood carried away with the outrages the throne itself; all were numbered among the *infâmes modérés* of 1793, and gloried in it.

After a highly eloquent discourse, pronounced by Pastor Rabaud St. Etienne, on the 24th of December, 1789, entire liberty of worship was accorded the Protestants; and on the 12th of March, 1790, the Constituent Assembly carried its decree into effect by calling this son of a proscribed pastor, and himself a pastor as well, to its presidency.

Thus it is that it pleased God to restore to his people their precious liberty of religion and conscience, — a liberty which has since passed into our laws and customs, — a liberty dearly bought, and henceforth imperishable.

A little while afterward the tempest of revolution made itself felt in the religious world, and the National Convention interdicted the exercise of all worship. Piety was again reduced to shut itself up in the sanctuary of the conscience, and to seek an asylum in the family. The registers of the Protestant civil list in our city cease with December 25, 1792. . . . . Thus, by a just judgment of Heaven, the National Convention made the Roman Church transiently experience the severities which the latter had for a long time practised upon the Protestants. *Et nunc, reges, intelligite; erudimini, qui judicatis terram!*

"The day came when in their turn the Catholics were victims of persecution," says M. Anquez. "They, too, had marriages in the wilderness, such as other pastors had celebrated when under the cross. It was in the

heart of the woods or the cellars of houses that the Catholics, jealous of obtaining a religious consecration of their union, received the nuptial blessing; and the priest whom they had summoned exposed himself, as did in the preceding century the Reformed minister, to the greatest peril in bestowing it upon them"; — yet without the newly married couple being considered or punished as living in concubinage, or their children being branded as illegitimate.

When passion had subsided, and calm was restored, reparative measures were considered. A decree of the 4th Ventose, An II., restored to religious sects the liberty of which it had been a grave error to deprive them. Definitively sanctioned on the 26th Messidor, An IX., this liberty found its regulation in the law of the 18th Germinal, An X.

In the following year, the Reformed Church of our city acquired its legal organization; and in 1803 La Rochelle became the head-quarters (*chef-lieu*) of a consistory, the jurisdiction of which extended to the arrondissements of Rochefort and Marennes. It comprised the churches of the Isle of Oleron, Marennes, Luzac, Nieulle, Souhe, La Rochelle, Rochefort, and the Isle of Ré. The decree of the 26th of April, 1853, in regard to Protestant worship, modified this arrangement, dividing up the consistory district of La Rochelle, which thereafter formed two consistories; viz. that of La Rochelle, with four pastors, two at the *chef-lieu*, one at Rochefort, and one at the Isle of Ré; and that of Marennes, with three pastors, one at the *chef-lieu*, one at Nieulle, and the other at Oleron.

On March 6, 1793, the Rochelais Protestants having

bought the former church of the Franciscans, a subscription list, the original of which remains in the Consistory's archives, was opened to pay the expenses of this purchase; and the premises were consecrated to Reformed worship in 1798. It is known that this church was built upon the site of St. Michael Hall, where the first services of evangelical religion were held; so that after three centuries of unheard-of outrage and terrible vicissitude, the La Rochelle Protestants returned to serve God on the very spot where their ancestors had worshipped him.[1]

[1] It does not concern us to outline the contemporaneous history of the Church of La Rochelle; but it may be of use to recall two memorable dates.

The Consistory of La Rochelle sent delegates to the General Protestant Assembly which met at Paris between Sept. 10 and Oct. 7, 1848. This assembly, purely auxiliary, numbered ninety delegates, fifty-two of them pastors, ministers of the Gospel, or professors of theology, and thirty-eight elders. It contented itself with an expression of convictions, publishing an address to the faithful, and preparing a new system of organic law for the Reformed Church, which the political authorities made use of in drawing up the decree of March 26, 1852. The Assembly asked that the local church might be reconstituted, and that an ecclesiastical authority be vested in its own Consistory, which was granted by the decree of 1852; it asked also the appointment of lay members of individual consistories from among male Protestants of over twenty-five years of age, who had lived one year in the parish, qualified by their first communion, and recognizing the Bible as the word of God, and the only rule of their faith; also the maintenance of the general consistories, save some modifications in their mode of election; and the restoration of individual synods and the General Synod.

"The celebration of the Third Secular Jubilee of the Reformation assumed the greatest *éclat* at La Rochelle. Not for long years past had so great a congregation, or one gathered from so wide a territory, repaired to the temple On the morning of May 29, 1859, an abundant distribution of relief was made to the church poor, in conformity with the programme decreed by the Council of Presbyters. During the morning service, a choir, assembled in the gallery, rendered the Hymn of Jubilee, set to an air from Beethoven, with most perfect effect. The anniversary

XVI.

To-day Catholics and Protestants live on the best of terms in the Rochelais city; mixed marriages are numerous, and, notwithstanding the serious inconveniences involved by these marriages from a stand-point of fervency and zeal, the general good understanding is not affected. For a long time past the same cemetery has been in use by both sects. On a recent occasion, the chief of the diocese, having thought it his duty to call for a strict execution of the burial law, in such a way as to separate after death those who had been united in life, the step was generally blamed, and the Catholics, against their bishop, advocated principles of tolerance, without the Protestants having need to intervene in the discussion at all. He who writes these lines was profoundly touched by it, and is happy to find here an opportunity to express his acknowledgments to whom they are due.

There are some, it is true, who are not inclined to

of the constitution of the Reformed Church of France had a special interest for the La Rochelle Protestants, since it was in their city that the Confession of Faith and the Ecclesiastical System of Discipline of 1559 were signed, twelve years after being drawn up. To sketch without bias the position and life of the Reformers of the sixteenth century was the aim proposed by M. Delmas in his discourse, and it enabled him to acquire the certainty that those eminent servants of God have won a lasting distinction by their faith, their sanctity, and their charity. The Presbyteral Council asked the printing of this discourse, entitled 'Pathways of Centuries Past.' This imposing solemnity gave birth to the 'Essay on the Origin and Progress of the Reformation at La Rochelle,' by M. L. de Richemond. It is a history rapidly sketched, yet complete, from the foundation of the Reformed Church of this city, and the pamphlet is prefaced by a notice of Philip Vincent, one of the most distinguished of La Rochelle's pastors." (*Compte Rendu Général*, published by the Jubilee Commission.)

Two young Rochelais were consecrated to the holy ministry in their native city in 1867 and 1869.

mutual sympathy and kindness: they would again excite religious passions, and would gladly stir up intolerance against dissenting sects. But such are in great error, and the Saviour tells them, as he did the disciples who wished him to bring down fire from heaven upon the cities that had refused to receive him, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Not only do they do outrage to the God of the Gospel, who is a God of love and peace, but they moreover do not understand the gravity of the situation, in presence of the perils which are making themselves manifest.

For we cannot believe in Papal infallibility, and our conscience refuses to associate the worship of things created with the worship of the living God; we none the less confess Jesus Christ as our Saviour and our God; we wish to live and die in his communion. But, in face of the constantly rising flood of impiety and materialism, is it wise to give way to rancor against scruples which are perfectly sincere, and which have by that very fact an inalienable claim upon the respect of those who do not share them? Is it not altogether more prudent and Christian-like to forget our mutual grievances, in order to unite our efforts against the common enemy, and are we not like those Greeks of the Lower Empire who bitterly discussed theological subtleties while the Turks were at the very gates of Constantinople?

But the enemy is always at the gates of the Church; he aims his blows, not only against Luther and against the Pope, but against Christ himself, seeking to pull him down to the level of humanity. It is neither mass nor Protestant service that is the subject of dispute in this im-

pious struggle : it is the Gospel and the cross. Let us remember that among these multitudes who seem to climb up from the abyss at the voice of this century's teachers, and who, in the vaunted pride of a science falsely so called, meditate vain things, and make war on the Eternal and his anointed, there may be some souls misled, whom it is endeavored to persuade that modern criticism has found a key to the Gospel ; to whom boast is made of the Church of the future, bearing in its train the terrestrial paradise, and commissioned to realize Satan's fallacious promise to our first parents, "Ye shall be as gods." Let us oppose a holy resistance to these pretended apostles of truth. Let us fight, joining hands under the banner of the Divine One crucified. Let us fight, not with carnal arms, but with the sword of the spirit and with the hammer of the word ; not with harshness and arrogance, but with the gentleness and humility of Christ. Let us remember that, among all these unfortunates who pursue a chimera, there may be men of heart as well, scandalized by the sight of our religious dissensions and fratricidal quarrels, whom the recollection of the stake and the scaffold estranges from Christianity more than the force of the arguments of its detractors does. Who knows but they might be attracted by the spectacle of our union, of our cordial affection ? Who knows but we might win them to the Gospel, by forcing the world to say of us, as of the early Christians, "Behold how they love one another" ?

Let us enter upon this holy warfare, not with the old armor of authority, as if we wished to impose upon others the doctrines of our Church or our personal opinions, but with the ever fresh method of serious and

impartial investigation. Without doubt, liberty has its perils and its anguish; but, dangerous as it may be, despotism is still more so, and the advantages it procures outweigh its inconveniences. To it, in fact, pertains a solution of the questions which separate us. The Gospel and Liberty, — these are the two agencies by means of which shall be solved the problems proposed to this generation. They will not be solved by the Gospel without Liberty; they will not be solved by Liberty without the Gospel; but they will be by the harmonious cooperation of these two forces, the one divine, the other human.

Let us not, then, fear Liberty, which is also a gift from God, and let us not banish it from our labors and researches. That would be to mistrust our best friend; it would be to deny our mother, for Christianity is the son of Liberty; and by Liberty it is that the former has spread abroad among men. It has furnished to the world the most moral of all spectacles, that of the powerlessness of force. Not only has it defended in its origin liberty of thought, but it has, by its teachings, proclaimed it. Tertullian, the most severe of all, the least disposed to offer concessions which would compromise any doctrine, said: "It is of right human and natural that each one should honor the God in whom he believes. One religion should not oppress another; it should cause itself to be accepted voluntarily, and not to be imposed by constraint." Religious despotism has had its day; and the means it has used — I refer to punishments and tortures — have ever been disavowed by the Gospel. Never, no, never have the Holy Scriptures permitted the use of the iron and of fire, to cause

by compulsion the acceptance of the religion of Jesus Christ; let such instruments be consigned to darkness, never thence to come forth again. "Creeds are defended by dying in their behalf," exclaims Lactantius, "and not by killing others in the name of them. If it is thought to strengthen them by bloodshed and torture, it is a mistake; that only tarnishes and dishonors them. Nothing should be freer than religion. *Nihil est tam voluntarium, quam religio.*"

Let us, then, vigorously repel this rude intervention of force, claiming to dominate and regulate faith. It almost invariably miscarries, for religious despotism is barren, or melancholy to those who practise it, while liberty, tempered by a sense of duty and humane responsibility, is always fruitful of results. Let us henceforth make a fortunate trial of it. Let us be children of peace, without sacrificing our convictions to a love of peace; but let us practise truth by charity, and follow the only proselytism worthy of the Master we serve, that of persuasion and a good example, leaving it to God to judge the hearts and consciences. In proportion as hate is impotent to influence those of a contrary opinion, so is love supreme in overcoming their resistance. Let us walk in charity then, and we shall behold the glory of God. There is the secret of the future, and toward it, if they would avoid vegetating and perishing, should Christian generations tend.

APPENDIX.[1]

CORROBORATIVE PAPERS.—UNEDITED DOCUMENTS.

No. I. — See p. 24.

THE prayers pronounced by M. David in the Church of St. Bartholomew before and after sermon have been preserved by Philippe Vincent, according to the journal of Pacqueteau, and published in the *Essai sur l'Origine et les Progrès de la Réformation à La Rochelle*. Yet, as these invocations present a great analogy to those of our actual Liturgy, we have not thought it worth while to reproduce them here, preferring to reserve the space for the prayers used in camp and in the City Council, in 1568 and 1628.

PRAYERS OF HUGUENOT SOLDIERS IN CAMP.

[Extract from a collection of Prayers, printed in 1568, by Berton, at La Rochelle.]

1. *Prayers for Soldiers and Pioneers of the Reformed Church.*

General prayer: Our help be in God, etc. My brothers, let each one of you appear before the Lord's face with confession of his faults.

* * * * *

2. *Prayers of Soldiers placed on Guard at Night.*

Lord God, since it hath pleased Thee to establish us on guard this night for the preservation of this place in which are now en-

[1] In translating the Appendix, it has been found advisable to omit several portions of it, which, though possessing much local interest, and an important bearing upon the original work as presented to the Protestant readers of France, would not prove essential to the translation as prepared for the American reader. — G. L. C.

closed a great number of thy faithful servants, vouchsafe to grant us grace that sleep overtake us not, and that we be brave and constant in sustaining and bearing patiently for Thy name, and for our brethren (for whom as for us Thy Son, Jesus Christ, suffered death), all work, and injury from the weather, esteeming ourselves happy, since in so doing we shall be keeping with Thee the watch of Israel, which never slumbers, and wearies not of doing good to its own; and above all, may we walk upon this guard as before Thee, who seest all things, even to the innermost heart, so that in all loyalty and fidelity each one of us may discharge his duty toward Thee and Thy Church, as well as obey the commands which our captains shall give us, according to the authority thou hast given them over us. Praying Thee, also, that Thou wilt vouchsafe to give them always wisdom and virtue to lead us well, and to command in conformity with Thy will. And in order that we may obtain these things, and others like unto them, even as now everything is disappearing covered by the darkness creeping over Thine earth, vouchsafe thus, by Thine infinite mercy, to cover and conceal all our faults and iniquities, freely pardoning them in the name and favor of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we ask Thee all these things, and others which Thou knowest to be expedient for the increase of Thy reign, as Himself hath taught us.

Our Father who art in heaven, etc. . . . .

I believe in God, the Father almighty, etc. . . . .

The love of our good God and Father, the grace, peace, and favor of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the communion of his Holy Spirit, rest upon us and all his Church forever. Amen.

3. *Prayer which Soldiers who have been on Guard at Night offer in the Morning, being placed on Guard at the Gates and upon the Ramparts.*

* * * * *

4. *Prayer of Soldiers led to Battle.*

O God of armies! since it now pleaseth Thee to employ us against Thine enemies and our own, vouchsafe by Thy power to take away their courage and strength to fight, and to drive them before us: or indeed, should it please Thee at this time to make use of us to cause them to feel Thy wrath, be pleased, O Lord, to aid us by Thy valor; for of ourselves we can do nothing; but being

by Thee led and strengthened, we shall shock and discomfort them boldly, for which Thine shall be the glory forever. Strengthen us then, our good God and Father, as well in heart as in body, so that there be not one of us who shall not do his duty well. But if in so doing it may please Thee to remove any one of us from this life, vouchsafe to him, according to Thy holy promises, to be gathered into life eternal; and inasmuch as our sins might exclude us from this favor, hold Thou fast to us. May it please Thee to pardon them all in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer, through whom we ask for all these things, and others which Thou knowest to be necessary for the increase of Thy reign, as Himself hath taught us.

Our Father who art in heaven, etc.[1]

* * * * *

[1] The following metrical translation of this prayer was prepared for and published in the New York *Tribune* (semi-weekly) of Feb. 28, 1879, by the translator of this work: —

O God of armies! since it now doth please
Thy will to lead us 'gainst Thine enemies,
  And ours, vouchsafe Thy might
To take away their courage and their strength
In battle, and before us, Lord, at length
  To put them all to flight.

Or, should it please Thee in that trying hour
To make them, through us, know Thy fury's power,
  Be pleased, O Lord, to aid
Us by Thy mighty valor. It is true,
We, of ourselves alone, can nothing do;
  But being by Thee stayed,

And led to combat, we shall bravely smite
And rout them; and for that, Thou shalt, of right,
  Fore'er be praised. Imbue
Us, God and Father, with such courage, then,
In heart and hand, that all of us like men
  To Thee our duty do.

And if to call us hence it please Thee, Lord,
Vouchsafe according to Thy Holy Word
  To gather us at last

5. *Prayer for Christian Soldiers who have gained a Victory.*

* * * * *

6. *Prayer for Christian Soldiers who have been overcome.*

* * * * *

7. *Prayers for those at work on the Fortifications.*

MORNING PRAYER.

* * * * *

EVENING PRAYER.

* * * * *

8. *Prayers made in* 1627 *before and after the Sessions of the Council, as taken from the Register of the Deliberations of the Corps de Ville of La Rochelle, preserved in the Library.*

IN THE NAME OF GOD.

Prayer at the Opening of the Council.

Eternal and All-powerful God, we beseech Thee that it may please Thee to have grace and mercy upon us, in the name and by the favor of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and to preside in our midst by Thy Holy Spirit, and by the same to guide and conduct us in all things for which we are here assembled (not without Thy divine providence), for the government and conduct of this city, giving us the spirit of wisdom to depend entirely upon Thy divine will and prudence, to deliberate and decide upon everything to

Into the Life Eternal; and although
Our sins might justly cause us to forego
This favor, hold us fast.

Be pleased those sins to pardon in the name
Of Jesus Christ, Thy blessed Son, who came
To pardon and to save:
In whom we pray for this, and all things fraught
With increase for Thy kingdom, as He taught
Us in the prayer He gave.

Our Father who art in heaven, etc.

Thy honor and glory, to the welfare and preservation both of ourselves and of all the citizens of this city, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Return of Thanks after the Council.

Lord God, who dost enlarge and distribute blessings to men to the end that they may recognize and praise Thee therefor, we render Thee thanks for all that it hath pleased Thee to have us do at this meeting, and that Thou alone art almighty to accomplish and perfect all that it pleaseth Thee; we ask Thee most humbly that it may be Thy good pleasure to bestow upon us the desire and the power to effect all that has been resolved upon and decreed, each one according to his vocation and office, faithfully, constantly, and diligently, to Thy glory, to the welfare and repose of all those of this city, and our salvation through Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Register of the clerk of the Council, held in the town aldermanic building of La Rochelle, at sound of the bell, in the accustomed manner, by Messieurs the Mayor, Aldermen, Counsellors, and Peers of said city, under the mayoralty of Jean Godeffroy, Esquire, Sieur du Richard, alderman of said city. April 17, 1627, to May 4, 1628.)

(*Library of La Rochelle.*)

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No. II. — See p. 102.

The Pastors and Elders of La Rochelle to Henry of Navarre.

Remonstrance made to the King of Navarre by the Deputies of the General Assembly of Reformed Churches of this Kingdom, convoked at La Rochelle, to which His Majesty responded with many evidences of piety. Signed: Henry.

To the King of Navarre.

Address 1.

Sire, — All the ministers of God who are at present in this city, together with the elders, feeling that the state and condition of affairs may soon summon your Majesty elsewhere, as all expect and think very necessary, have desired not to fail to remind him, by this very humble remonstrance, of the matters of which, as they have occurred, they have already oftentimes warned him, at the same time declaring to him what, according to the Word of God, they recognize as necessary, as hereinafter stated, to the end that God, changing justice into mercy, may bring this war to a happy issue, and such a one as all good people desire; and we do so the more boldly, inasmuch as your Majesty has declared to us heretofore the desire he has to be informed of matters which may tend to the welfare and establishment of our churches.

Reply 1.

The said lord the king has and always will have great pleasure in the servants of God, showing him what they see to be for the good of His pure service, and of the charge to which it hath pleased God to call them.

Address 2.

In the first place, Sire, we recognize the fact of how greatly for two years past, since the present troubles began, we have been and are exercised by many afflictions. . . . .

Reply 3.

. . . From which he feels encouraged more and more to devote his life to His service; he conceives a certain hope of seeing His

churches restored in our time by God's own grace, and he begs them with all his heart to pray to God for him: that he may be made to grow and progress daily in his resolve which he has made to spare no pains for the advancement of so holy a work.

(The document has been folded, and broken upon the crease of the fold by its age, and a half of it has not been recovered.)

Address 4.

And as we now enter upon our most important business, and as this circumstance admonishes us to look more carefully than ever to the regulation and reform of all our actions, to the end that the purity of our lives may be in keeping with the equity of our cause, we beseech you, very humbly, Sire, and exhort you, in the name of Him who has placed his word in our mouths, and who is the just Judge, not only of the lesser, but also of the greatest kings and princes of the world, that, following our previous remonstrances, which have been often reiterated, you reform not only your person and home, but also all the troops who follow you, purging them of blasphemy, gambling, wantonness, violations, larcenies, peculations, and other such vices, to which the license of arms has given birth among our soldiery, to our own very great regret; and we pray God that in his infinite mercy he will not impute to us, nor to his churches, such and so great dissoluteness. . . . .

Reply 4.

But especially does the said lord king desire that God be served, His name invoked, and His word preached in his army, to instruct and keep each one in his duty; and to this end he prays the ministers at La Rochelle assembled to designate from the present writing a certain number of ministers to follow the troops, to whom he will cause to be rendered the honor and respect due their office, and to be provided carefully all they may need.

Address 5.

We beseech also very humbly of your Majesty to bring about as far as possible the advancement of God's glory in this kingdom, by the establishment of preaching of the Gospel in all places where God shall give you the means of so doing. And inasmuch, Sire, as the great gentleness you have displayed heretofore toward the Roman ecclesiastics has only increased their bitterness, and their very great ill-will against the party, — being notoriously leagued

against the peace and stability of this kingdom, contributing usually for the payment of our enemies, and being the principal agents and solicitors of the act of excommunication which the Pope has caused to be published against your Majesty, — for this cause we beseech you very humbly to recognize them as your enemies, so that they may henceforth be unable to derive aid from that which . . . .

Address 6.

* * * * *

Replies 5 and 6.

The said lord king will hold naught in so great esteem, whether in time of war or peace, as the re-establishment of God's service, and its growth in all possible ways ; and this he hopes to show by good purposes. And as to the Roman ecclesiastics, the said lord king knows very well the bad offices he has received from most of them, and has no doubt that their evil disposition, when opportunity may offer, will produce very bad effects. But as for the express declaration asked for, that being a matter involving consequences for the party in general, and consequently deserving to be decided upon by the advice of all the provinces, he feels assured that the petitioners find it reasonable that he make no innovation without having heard the opinion of all, receiving their own, meanwhile, in good part, as coming from a genuine zeal and affection on their part for God's glory, and the preservation of those places where He is served.

Notwithstanding, he will recommend to the governors of those places to have a watchful eye upon the deportment of said ecclesiastics ; and where they shall see them undertaking and plotting anything to the public injury and peril, to chastise them severely according to the requirements of the case, and in proportion as they shall have forfeited the protection and safeguard under which they shall have been received and maintained. His said Majesty will also ordain that the safeguards which by them shall have been infringed shall be revoked ; and for this purpose writing shall be sent to all generals and governors of provinces and places, to duly inform themselves concerning these, and to send information on the subject as soon as possible to the said lord king, with a list of those who may have abused their privileges. And in this way the matter will only be hastened with careful deliberation and due knowledge of cause.

(Address 7 and its reply are wanting, as are also replies to Addresses 8 and 9, in which his Majesty was requested to render no decision in regard to the Reformed Churches without consulting the deputies approved by the common consent thereof, and awaiting the notables delegated by the Church of La Rochelle, "from this time forth to assist in the deliberations and business there held concerning the churches.")

ADDRESS 10.

Not having been informed of the reasons which have served to induce your Majesty to become associated with certain lords of this kingdom, making profession of the Roman religion, without at present entering into further remarks upon the subject, we pray your Majesty very humbly that it may please him to see to it that in future such associations cause no prejudice to the churches, and to remedy it, in case any inconveniences have already been caused by it, including alike all our churches, as well on this as on the other side of the Loire, notably those of Upper and Lower Languedoc, inasmuch as equally and with the same affection and obedience they have all recognized and do recognize you as their protector.

REPLY 10.

As to the associations into which the said lord king has entered with some Catholic lords, he has not done so without the express advice of the principal churches and those which were principally interested therein, and he begs them to believe that in this, as in everything else, he has had no other object than the common preservation and defence against the efforts of the opposing party. Well may he assure them that, God helping, he will bring to bear in such matters such caution, even in remembrance of the present remonstrance, that no inconvenience shall therefrom result to God's service or to the churches' welfare.

ADDRESS 11.

*   *   *   *   *

REPLY 11.

And in conclusion, the said lord king thanks the assembly of ministers for the attention it has shown him, begs them to continue on ever more and more, and assures them that his ears will

always be open to them, whenever they shall have occasion to address him in anything that concerns God's service, the churches' welfare, and the duties of his office: and here he especially desires to be remembered in their prayers, public as well as private, that it may please God to strengthen his hands and his courage, and to bless his arms and his labors, for His glory and the repose of his poor people. Amen.

(No date.)

Original signed by the hand of HENRY,
And, lower down, DE LOMENIE (with a flourish).

(*Archives of Dublin*.)

LETTER OF HENRY IV. TO THE ROCHELAIS, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS ABJURATION.

To our dear and well-beloved, the Mayors, Aldermen, and Peers of our City of La Rochelle.

It is still with a firm resolve to maintain the edicts of pacification heretofore made, without suffering, by reason of religion, your consciences to be forced, of which we beg you to rest well assured, and not to displease us by showing any indication of distrust, which would be so annoying to us, as we feel there is nothing so far from our intentions; the which, while it will change nothing in regard to the bearing of said edicts, will also cause little difference in the affection we have always borne you, having every occasion, in the good services and assistance always afforded us, to love and gratify you, and to preserve you from all oppression and injury; which we shall always do, as far as lies in our power, as we shall justify it by our conduct, which will be seen to be principally directed to maintaining all our good subjects in good peace and repose; in which we hope God will give us grace to succeed, as it is that which we must ask of his Divine goodness, and the principal object and ground of all our labors.

Given at Saint-Denis in France, Sunday, July 25, 1593.

HENRY.

No. III. — See Page 64.

Were the Excesses of 1568 Authentic?

If the massacre of priests precipitated from the height of the Tour de la Lanterne, together with a bailiff and an attorney of the Presidial Court, was indeed a fact, it was only to be deplored and turned from in horror.

Even had it been done as a reprisal against the cruelties which the Catholics had made the Protestants suffer, it would have been none the less to be condemned, for it is not permissible for Christians to take revenge, nor to return any one evil for evil. But does the fact partake of the nature of certainty? It may be doubted, and here are the reasons which give rise to doubt in our mind.

1st. In the first place, Amos Barbot, the Protestant historian, estimable as he is, cannot inspire unlimited confidence, for Arcère himself, who borrows many facts from him, says, "that he occasionally allows to slip into his recital particular occurrences which he has drawn from the archives, and some facts which he has taken from Nicole Gilles and Belleforest." But this tendency to weave in events borrowed from others ought to make him reticent in that regard, especially when he is the first to attest facts which happened a long time ago; for the events to which they relate date back to 1568, while his annals were written subsequent to the year 1613. As to the other historians who have reproduced them, they were still further removed from them: they wrote under the inspiration of a celebrated society, which did not scruple to alter historical documents, and they do not agree with each other either as to the number of victims, or as to the date of the event itself, for the anonymous author of the pamphlet entitled *L'Entrée de la Religion Prétendue Réformée dans La Rochelle, écrite par les Habitants présents*, an abstract by P. S., dedicated to the Marquis of Molac, and printed by Toussaint de Govy, printer and bookseller of the Jesuits in 1645, puts this fact under date of 1562. So that there is less guaranty from this quarter than in the annals of Barbot.

2d. Furthermore, is it not strange that Philippe Vincent, who made inquiry in 1635 into the facts relative to the establishment of the Reformation at La Rochelle, should not have said a word of this tragic event in his work printed at that period? Had the fact been known and credited when he wrote his *Recherches sur les*

Commencements et les Progrès de la Réforme in our city, he would not have failed to report it, whether by calling up extenuating circumstances, or by inflicting severe blame for it, as he did in regard to the images broken in 1562. Does not the silence of such a man as Philippe Vincent, who on other occasions avows the errors of his fellow-Protestants, weaken the story attributed to Amos Barbot, and the more so when the lawyer La Haize, charged with justifying the acts of Pontard's administration, makes no mention of this, which would not have failed to be thrown up against him by his adversaries?

3d. Let us remark, then, that the royal government, in making, shortly after that, the peace of Longjumeau, does not stipulate the least penalty for the authors of this crime, the victims of which were priests, and that the name of none of these unfortunates has reached us. Unless we admit the singular explanation of this silence given by the priest Gaufreteau, curé of Libourne, to wit, that in the fear of glorifying bad priests, who were very numerous at that period, the names of the martyrs were suppressed. When, in a moment of revolution and popular effervescence, any crime has been committed against Protestant ministers, prosecutions are instituted against the authors as soon as calm is restored and authority has regained its sway. Witness the judicial prosecutions against the authors of the massacre of priests in 1793. If the chiefs of a conspiracy are spared, some subaltern at least is seized upon to save the honor of principles. But in this case we find neither prosecutions nor punishment, although the authors must have been known, and the tribunals would not have been slow in discharging their duty. Could it have been because the acts that were later conjured up had not the importance attributed to them, or were they imaginary?

In any case, if the massacre took place, it did not possess the character of that religious fanaticism charged against it, and it had as much to do with politics as it had with religion, or more, since there were laymen among the victims.

In short, if certain indications seem to establish the truth of facts we are discussing, others arise to diminish the certainty of them. Numerous circumstances indicate that they are improbable; serious doubts arise in the mind of the impartial reader, and they must be ranked among events the mystery of which history has not yet penetrated.

No. IV. — See p. 175.

SITUATION IN WHICH PROTESTANT OFFICERS AND SAILORS WERE PLACED BY THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.

MR. A. JAL has taken from the archives of the Ministry of Marine, and published in his *Dictionnaire critique de Biographie et d'Histoire*, the following curious dispatches, which show the situation created by the King for all marine officials professing the Reformed religion.

April 14, 1680.

His Majesty commands me to say to you that he has resolved little by little to weed out from the Marine Corps all members of the R. P. R., beginning with the commissioners. He will give orders for the removal of those of that religion who remain.

With regard to clerks, he desires you to inform me if there is any Huguenot among them, in your port, and that (if so) you cease to employ him as soon as you shall have received this letter.

With regard to officers, his Majesty has resolved to send to your port, through the means of the Bishop of La Rochelle, a skilful and capable ecclesiastic to instruct those who may desire to put themselves in the way of acknowledging the errors in which they are engaged, and you may, on this ecclesiastic's arrival, make known very quietly to those of said officers who are Protestants, that his Majesty desires still to bear with them for some time, in order to see if they wish to avail themselves of the assistance that he is willing to give them, in order to instruct them in the Catholic religion; but that after that it is his intention not to employ their services if they continue in their error.

Do not fail to send us an accurate list of all officers of the Marine belonging to the R. P. R. who are in the department of Rochefort.

SEIGNELAY.

(*Archives de la Marine.* — *Dépêches*, 1680.)

May 19, 1680.

If any of them (Protestant officers), through stubbornness, refuse to profit by this grace, and to attend the meetings held for this purpose, the Intendant has an order to inform his Majesty of it, and upon them it will be that he will commence the execution of that

which he has made known to them, and of their removal from the Marine service. He (the Intendant) is not to fail to render count of what transpires on this subject, and to make known chiefly whether Sir Forant[1] attends these meetings.

June 11, 1680.

His Majesty would like the Intendant to make known to the public that he will have employment given *to those who abjure their heresy, provided they are gentlemen.*

His Majesty desires, also, that Sieur de Seuil (the Intendant at Brest) inform him particularly whether Catholic prayers, mass, and the other exercises of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, are held publicly and in a loud voice upon the quarter-deck, on the days and hours when they should be, and whether the Protestant captains offer any hindrance; and let it also be stated in what manner the prayers of the Pretended Reformers are said, whether they withdraw to the forward part of the ship, and between the two decks, and whether they take care to say them in a low voice, and without being heard.

SEIGNELAY.

We shall complete these documents by the reproduction of an unedited dispatch from Seignelay, the Minister of Marine, to Intendant Begon.

VERSAILLES, October 8, 1686.

His Majesty has been greatly relieved to learn that there were no more than fifty convicts of the R. P. R. in the galleys. He recommends you to labor continually for their conversion, *and to that end to avail yourself of every means you may judge proper to put in use in order to succeed therein the more easily. . . .*

You will find hereto annexed his Majesty's orders for the setting at liberty of forty-six convicts, as you proposed.

October 16, 1686.

The man named Ougier, whom you have ordered released from the chain, is a new convert from the place called Besse, and his liberty has been granted him upon Cardinal Le Camus's assurance that he has made abjuration, and that his conversion seemed sincere. (C, 154.)

[1] Sir Forant, a chief of squadron, born at La Tremblade, son and grandson of Protestant sailors who had honorably figured in the wars of La Rochelle. (See *Marins Rochelais, Notes Biographiques*, by Mr. L. de Richemond.)

No. V.

Some Young Girls shut up in Convents weary their Jailers by their Constancy, and are driven out of France.

Notwithstanding the prohibition against their leaving France, stubborn Protestants were driven from their country.

The following is an extract from a letter of the Minister of the King's household, B. Phelippeaux, Marquis of Châteauneuf, to the Bishop of La Rochelle, Henri-Marie de Laval de Bois-Dauphin.

Sir, — I have spoken to his Majesty, in accordance with your commands, in order that the young lady D'Assais may be removed from the Ursuline Convent of La Rochelle, and taken to that of Pyberlan, and by every consideration that you had thought possible to bring to bear upon the subject; but, as M. de Chastelaillon has two daughters there, and as the said young lady is his niece, his Majesty has desired to ascertain from him whether he would not be sorry to have his said niece go into that convent, and whether he does not apprehend that it may turn them away from their duty; together with his Majesty's opinion on this subject, which I write him in order to have his reply thereto: "In regard to the De la Forest young ladies, who are in the communities of Fontenay and La Fougereuse, you will take pains to inform me whether your advice would not be to send them out of the kingdom, since they have remained up to the present time obstinately resolved not to abjure the R. P. R.; but at the same time it will be proper that you find it agreeable to apprise me whether they have a father and mother, and any property."

As regards the De Tolé young ladies, they were only permitted to leave the religious houses where they were, upon information that the Intendant (Michel Begon) had received news that they had made abjuration, and given proof of genuine conversion. If you have had any advice to the contrary, it will be very proper for you to talk with him about it.

I am always, sir, your very humble and very affectionate servant,

Chateauneuf.

At Marly, April 26, 1690.

(*Archives Départementales*, Series C.)

No. VI.

Pastoral Letter addressed from a Place of Refuge to Protestants remaining in France, in order to sustain them in their Faith.

On the 18th of August, 1698, there appeared a pastoral letter addressed to the faithful of the provinces of Saintonge and Aunis, by their fellow-Protestants, and having for its object the encouragement of the latter, after the style of the early pastoral letters, credited to the celebrated Jurieu. In this anonymous writing, bearing no name of place or printer, on account of the severity of the times, congratulations are extended to the Protestants remaining in France, and to pretended new converts, upon their refusal to go to mass, and they are warmly urged to persist in their faith.

The following are the passages in this letter which appear most significant in an historical point of view: —

"We say, brethren, for your consolation, that your faith did not fail you; it was the fire hidden under the cinders; it was an eclipse that passed over you; it was a swoon; and thus I would compare you to trees; I would say that the persecution you had suffered was like a rude winter which had stripped you of your leaves, your flowers, and your fruits, without, however, taking away your life. Charity induces us to believe this, and the result confirms it. We learn they are consigning some of you to the islands, some to the châteaux; that others are being cast into prisons and cloisters: we learn they are separating husbands from their wives, that they are taking away children from their fathers, and that when the latter do not wish to send them to be catechised by the priests, they are condemned to continual fines; and that thus you are pillaged and sacked. All this, brethren, should neither surprise nor discourage you. The salamander lives in the flames, the trust of the faithful grows strong and bright in persecution. Your children, tender plants whom we look upon as the seed of the Church of France, cause us real anxiety. For, whether you have forgotten the advice given you a few years ago on this subject, by the illustrious author of the former pastoral letters, to prevent their attending the curé's catechisings, whether there be some among you who, in order to protect themselves from fines, have sacrificed these little creatures, or whether force takes them from you, — in either case,

we can only feel extremely afflicted. While awaiting the time when God may open to you the means of serving him publicly, openly, and without fear, follow the counsel of the illustrious author whom I have already more than once cited. Do not relinquish your mutual meetings; read there God's word, read the sermons and prayers which a pious author (M. le Page) has just composed for your consolation; you will find therein an earnestness which will spread to your very marrows. Read and pray. Pray God to touch the heart of your King. After the confession you have just made in such a Christian-like way, and which God put into your hearts, — after that you, our very dear brethren of La Rochelle, Marennes, La Tremblade, Arvert, and elsewhere, have made your declaration so boldly to the Intendant, when he asked you if you did not wish to attend mass, and answered him with one voice, 'No,' — after this avowal, I say, there is no more wavering. You must from day to day increase your courage, resolve to die, meet, pray to God, and edify each other. This is the way to impart courage to those who are still hesitating, to help them rise up with you, and all together to astonish your persecutors, and finally put a stop to their acts of violence. Ah, may it please God to diffuse a generous and Christian spirit at this time throughout the entire kingdom! What a salutary effect would it produce! I am persuaded of it; for our persecutors, perceiving that their redoubled torments during the twelve years since the dragoon mission began have been unable to bring about their design, which was the destruction of our holy religion, would relent in their passion. I do not know, my brethren, whether, in your situation, or in the condition of affairs, I ought to advise you to remain where you are, or to exhort you to go out from Babylon; but I do know well that it is my duty to encourage you to hold fast in the faith. Take care that none rob you of your crown, and be faithful to God and to his Christ, even unto death. Study all, as many as there are of you, — study your salvation in fear and trembling. Let those who feel strength, and who feel in their hearts that God moves them by his Spirit even to a resistance against temptation, remain to sustain those who are feeble, and to convert those who are astray, but let them do it by force of their good precepts, and by the sanctity of a pure and irreproachable life."

No. VII.— See p. 229.

THE FLIGHT.

The Robillard Family leaves La Rochelle to go abroad and seek a free Exercise of the Religion it professes. (1687.)

The *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme*, published in 1865 the story of the departure from France of the Robillard family in 1687, they having embarked on an English ship to go into foreign lands to seek liberty of conscience, and the exercise of our holy religion.

"At two o'clock in the night (April 27th), four sailors came ashore at low tide, took us on their shoulders, I with my little sister in my arms being placed on the head of one of them; so they carried us to the ship, and made us enter the hiding-place they had prepared, the opening to which was so small that there was a man inside to pull us through. After we had been put there, and were seated on the salt, being able to assume no other posture, the trapdoor was closed, and tarred over like the rest of the vessel, so that nothing of it could be seen. The place was so low that our heads touched the planks above; we took care to hold our heads under the beams, so that when the visitors, according to their fine custom, should stick their swords through, they would not pierce our skulls. As soon as we had embarked sail was set, and the King's officers came to make their visit. We had the good fortune not to be found or discovered, even on a second and a third search. The wind, which was favorable, bore us, by eleven or twelve o'clock in the morning, out of sight of all the enemies of truth. It was time, for we were choking in that hole, and thought we were going to give up the ghost there. They gave us air, and, some hours later, we came out more dead than alive."

This very explicit recital then exposes with numerous details all the vicissitudes of the voyage, the bad faith of the English captain, who landed the refugees at Falcombe, instead of taking them to Exeter, their arrival in that city, where they were received by a French minister, M. Sauxay, formerly pastor at Tonnay-Boutonne, and by M. de Saint-Surin, and where they were successively rejoined by other members of their family. The author of this narration, Suzanne de Robillard, was the mother of the famous General de la Motte-Fouqué.

Vicissitudes of the Journey of the Misses Raboteau, Fugitives from La Rochelle on account of their Religion.

The *Témoin de la Vérité* of January 8, 1863, published from an English sheet, "Sunday at Home," the interesting story we are about to tell, and the remembrance of which has been transmitted from generation to generation in the maternal family of the narrator.

La Rochelle having become the asylum for Protestant refugees, the Raboteau family sought refuge there in the hour of peril, and became the owners of the Pont-Gibaud premises, a long time before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; but at the commencement of the eighteenth century this place of refuge had itself to be abandoned by many; among others by the chief of the Raboteau family, with his young wife. Flight had become an imperious necessity, since they were obliged to resolve upon it at the time when Madame Raboteau was on the point of becoming a mother for the first time. Providence conducted the fugitives to Ireland. M. Raboteau, having some relations with the French refugees who had settled in Dublin, according to their advice and encouragement, decided to join the little French church which had been formed in that city. His wife and he accordingly set out from La Rochelle, for Ireland, carrying with them their money, their jewels, and their most needed articles of clothing. But Madame Raboteau's confinement was hastened by the anxiety and fatigue of travel: it took place in a hotel about fifty miles south of Dublin.

M. Raboteau founded at Dublin a banking-house which became prosperous. He established his two daughters in an honorable family of Sligo, and his son, on attaining his majority, devoted himself to the wine trade, and entered into business relations with the proprietors of French vineyards. He made several voyages to La Rochelle, and was put in communication with the old friends and relatives of his father, who lived at Pont-Gibaud: he thus became the adviser and dependence of his two cousins, who had confidence in his living faith, in his prudence and firmness, and he was, in fact, able to render them effective aid. The Misses Raboteau, young, wealthy, and amiable, had been sought in marriage by two Roman Catholics, whom their guardian favored. The latter urged his wards to yield to his advice by marrying the two young men, threatening, in case of refusal, to have them shut up in a convent, according to the cruel custom of that time. The two sisters laid their troubles before the Lord, with a firm trust that he would, in

one way or another, deliver them. Jean Raboteau advised his cousins to prepare secretly for flight, which was, he thought, their only means of safety. A lady of La Rochelle, a widow and advanced in years, whose faith and charity had been tested, entered cordially into Jean's plan, and offered to conceal and protect the two sisters until M. Raboteau's ship was ready to leave for Ireland. The eve of the marriage arrived. It was one of those days of stifling heat that sometimes occur in summer-time. The horses, hardly able to withstand the temperature of the stables, were tied under the walnut-trees to pass the night there ; the preparations for the next day's festival had filled the house with a joyous bewilderment. The young girls retired early to their rooms to watch and pray. When everybody was asleep, a little after midnight, they passed out, carrying a small quantity of clothing, in which they had concealed their jewelry. Their cavalier awaited them not far off, with two horses : upon one he caused one of his relatives to mount, he placing himself on the other horse with his cousin on the croup behind him. They traversed in silence the short distance separating them from La Rochelle. As soon as Jean had confided his cousins to the widow's hands, he promptly returned to Pont-Gibaud, re-fastened the horses at the spot whence he had taken them, and withdrew to his room. Next day there was a great flutter in the house ; but the guardian's searchings of course proved fruitless. The disappointed *fiancés* joined with their families in going to complain to the authorities and invoke their aid ; but the fugitives had not been received on board of any of the ships in port, including Jean's. The moment for sailing arrived. The question was to transfer his cousins from the widow's house on board the ship : to effect that, Jean had them placed in two great cases of apples, which were put on board without arousing suspicion. Once at sea, the prisoners were set at liberty. By God's blessing the voyage was fortunate, and all arrived safe and sound, at Dublin. The two sisters joined the French Refugees' Church, and shortly afterward entered, by marriage, the pious families of Barré and Chaigneau, who were acquaintances of the Raboteaus. One married Colonel Barré (Isaac), who was afterward a distinguished member of the House of Commons, and the other, M. Chaigneau. Jean-Charles Raboteau himself married, a short time after, the daughter of an Irish ecclesiastic named Thornton, rector of Tully, in County Kildare. Most clearly the Lord's blessing rested on this family, and on the little French colony.

No. VIII.

Letter of Louis XIII. to Intendant Argenson, upon the Admission of Rochelais Protestants to Public Employment.

Monsieur d'Argenson: —

The inhabitants of the R. P. R. of my city of La Rochelle having made me earnest entreaty to be admitted, as my other subjects are, into the arts and trades, of which there is a mastership in the said city, and that, besides, they may be chosen without distinction to exercise the charges of police commissioners, parish syndics, or judges of the Merchants' Exchange, as likewise that they may be admitted to the offices of assayers and collectors of taxes, as is done throughout the whole extent of my kingdom, and desiring in all things to treat them as favorably as it shall be possible for me to do, I have wished to address you this letter, by advice of the Queen Regent, madame, my mother, to direct you to inform me very particularly of the effect of this affair, and thereupon to give me an opinion, and in what way it has been going in the past, so that, then, I may attend to it, if I shall see it to be proper, as well for the good of my service as for the satisfaction of my subjects of the said religion. However, my intention is that the said inhabitants shall enjoy the benefit of my edicts, and particularly that which was accorded them by that of Nantes, to which you will hold fast, with a reservation, nevertheless, and exception of those things of which they have been deprived by my declaration made at the time of the reduction of the said city of La Rochelle to my sway, the which declaration I wish and intend to have exactly kept and observed according to its form and tenor.

Upon which I pray God to have you, M. d'Argenson, in His holy keeping.

Written at Paris the 19th day of March, 1645.

[Signed:] Louis.
[And lower down:] Phelypeaux.

Indorsed: "To Monsieur d'Argenson, Councillor in my Council of State, and Intendant of Justice, Police, and Finances in Poitou, Saintonge, and the city and government of La Rochelle."

Verified from the original, by me, a Councillor, and Secretary of the King and of Finances. Catelan.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM THE LA ROCHELLE CONSISTORY TO M. DE ROZEMONT, December 7, 1681.

You have learned from our previous letters that the same vexations are still kept up here; that they do not cease taking as a prisoner every citizen of Poitou they find, and that they distress all Protestants in the country districts by exorbitant service-taxes, far exceeding in amount the property of many of the poor people. We make haste as fast as we can to send you proofs and certificates as records of all this. Finally, here we are arrived at the acme of our misery, and threatened with having here at an early day some soldiery (*gens de guerre*) to live here as soldiery, and the pretext advanced for it is, they say, that we favor the escape of the king's subjects into foreign lands. That is to say, to speak properly, that it is because some of our inhabitants have not been inhuman enough to allow some poor families, driven from their homes and property, by treatment hitherto unexampled among Christians, to sleep out of doors, and die of hunger, while being subjects of the same king and of the same state. God wills it thus; His name be blessed! Amen. We pray him to vouchsafe us grace to bear patiently the chastisements he is visiting upon us, and make them serve for our correction and the amendment of our lives.

(*Dublin Archives.*)

From La Rochelle, October 24, 1681.

They detained yesterday an English ship about to set sail, and on board of which there were . . . . persons, men and children of our religion who were withdrawing to England, being no longer able to subsist in the country where they have been ruined, and from which they were going forth to escape the persecutions inflicted upon them in their persons and property. Such distress was never seen, for these poor folks were obliged to leave the ship without knowing what was to happen, this last misfortune having taken away what little property was left, and which they had put in shape to carry away with them: so that there they were exposed to nakedness and starvation, had not God taken pity on them. Among these persons were some from this city, who, having been sentenced to close their shops, and no longer having means of living or sustaining their families by their trade, which was all in the world they had to depend upon, were thus going away elsewhere to save their miserable lives. They were accordingly arrested, and some of them thrown into prison.

No. IX.

List of Pastors of the Reformed Church of La Rochelle,

Prepared from the list published in "La Rochelle Protestante," verified and completed by the aid of the registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths, and other authentic documents.

1.— 1555. Philibert Hamelin.
2.— 1557. Charles de Clermont, called La Fontaine.
3.— 1557. Jean de la Place.
4.— 1557. Pierre Richer, called De Lisle (died at La Rochelle, March 8, 1580).
5.— November, 1558. Ambroise Faget.
6.— 1559. Buslé.
7.— 1559. Nicolas Folion, called De la Vallée.
8.— 1561. De Lespine (*alias* L'Espina).
9.— 1562. André de Mazières, Sieur de la Place, was deposed, says De Thou, and died in 1597.
10.— 1562. Charles Léopard.
11.— February, 1564. Noé (*alias* Noël) Magnen.
12.— 1564. Odet de Nort.
13.— 1568. Bernard Boaste.
14.— 1569. Nicole Garnier.
15.— 1572. Jacques Boucquet.
16.— 1572. Dubreil.
17.— May, 1573. Jean Malavaud.
18.— August, 1573. Gilles Ragueneau.
19.— 1574. Guillaume Prevost.
20.— Dec. 1, 1574. N. Gorré, called Daniel (Daniel Gorré, or N. G. Daniel, or N. G. called Daniel). From 1601 to 1612 is found another pastor of the same name.
21.— Dec. 31, 1574. Aymé de la Place.
22.— Sept. 4, 1576. Luc Dumont.
23.— March 27, 1577. Boysseul. (Arcère ascribes to him a "Treatise against Dancing.")
24.— 1580. Antoine Avisse.
25.— Bernard Girauld.
26.— Dec. 1581. Mathias Goier.
27.— March 18, 1584. A. Dundas.
28.— 1585. Pierre Hesnard.

29. — 1585. Robert Thierry.
30. — 1585. A. Gaudron, *alias* De Lestang (De Lestang, *alias* Gaudron, A. de Lestang).
31. — July, 1585. Jean Fleury.
32. — August, 1585. Laurent Pollot.
33. — December, 1585. Jean Lamotte, called La Vallée.
34. — 1585. Guillaume Abric.
35. — 1585. François Salomeau, called Du Vivier.
36. — 1586. Jean Chanet.
37. — March, 1586. Belon, called Duchesne.
38. — October, 1586. Hiérosme Le Petit. He was appointed principal of the College, and died in the exercise of his functions in 1591.
39. — 1587. De Claireville.
40. — 1587. Dominique de l'Osse. Chosen as chaplain of the Duchess of Bar, sister of Henry IV.; he declined that honor. He painted a portrait of the Duchess of Deux-Ponts, and of Henriette de Rohan. He married Madeleine Moreau.
41. — May 10, 1589. P. Urdes, called D'Espoir.
42. — 1590. Jacques Merlin.
43. — 1591. Pierre Roulleau, of La Rochelle.
44. — 1591. Isaïe Guineau.
45. — 1592. Jehan-Baptiste Rota (*alias* Rotan).
46. — April, 1594. Samuel de Loumeau.
47. — February, 1600. Hiérosme Colomiez. ("Figured with honor in the Consistory of his country," says Arcère. "He was at the same time very learned, and a great preacher.")
48. — October, 1601. — René-Louis le Cercler, Sieur de la Chapellière. ("Distinguished himself as much by his virtues as by his talent of speech."— Arcère.)
49. — December 28, 1605. Gédéon Dumas de Montmartin, Sieur de la Turpinière.
50. — 1607. Louis Auboyneau.
51. — March 7, 1613. Jean-Pierre Salbert, married to Suzanne Ferret, in 1615; and, becoming a widower, he married Jeanne Le Coq, in 1642.
52. — February 26, 1615. Michel Blanc.
53. — 1624. Pierre Perris, married to Marie Lesueur.
54. — March 22, 1625. Pierre Bosquillon.

55. — 1625. Pierre Menanceau.
56. — 1626. Philippe Vincent.
57. — 1627. L. Etienne Pallenyer.
58. — 1627. Salomon Lefèvre (Lefebvre, or Feure).
59. — 1633. Jean Flanc abjured from motives of interest, in 1673, and entered the orders. He obtained a pension of 500 livres from the Abbey of Saint-Sauveur, and another of 200 livres. There have been published under his name some *Œuvres Meslées* (Haag and Rainguet, according to M. de la Morinerie). According to M. Callot, on the other hand, Flanc died in 1663, remaining in the Evangelical ministry up to the time of his death.
60. — May, 1640. Elie Bouhereau.
61. — May, 1648. Gabriel Salbert, Esquire, Lord of Nantilly.
62. — July, 1651. Laurent Drelincourt.
63. — June, 1653. Jean Daillé.
64. — 1654. Jacques Gaultier.
65. — 1654. Jean Dumesny.
66. — 1659. André Lortie (*alias* De l'Ortie), married to Marie Pelletier.
67. — 1660. Samuel Priouleau.
68. — 1660. Jacques de Tandebaratz.
69. — 1661. Jacques Guybert.
70. — 1663. Daniel-Henri de Laizement.
71. — 1681. Théodore Blanc.

The pastors who, at peril of their lives, exercised the holy ministry at La Rochelle from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes to the middle of the eighteenth century, have left no registers, permitting a chronological statement of their different visitations in our city and its environs. They are, besides, mentioned in the course of this notice.

72. — 1755. Jean Pajon.
73. — Nov. 10, 1761. J. Picard. (Minister of the holy Gospel, pastor "under the cross": later, on the 3d of August, 1765, he assumes the title of "Pastor of the Reformed Church of La Rochelle.")
74. — 1766. J. Jay. (Minister of the holy Gospel, pastor "under the Cross," pastor of the Reformed Church of La Rochelle (1767), previously pastor at La Haye.)
75. — Nov. 19, 1768. Peirot.

76. — Nov. 1, 1769. Martin.
77. — Nov. 16, 1771. Gleize.
78. — Nov. 11, 1773. Métayer, Sr.
79. — Nov, 8, 1775. Jean-Paul Bétrine, formerly pastor of the Church of Nantes, received a call, Nov. 8, 1775, from the elders and deacons of the churches of the province of Aunis.

Bétrine had as his colleagues in 1780: —

80. — 1780. Voulan.
81. — 1785. Blachon.
82. — 1791. François Estienvrot. Pastor Emeritus. On the 8th Nivose, An XI., he was invited to attend the sessions of the Consistory, after the Revolutionary whirlwind.
83. — 12th Brumaire, An II., Jean-Alexandre Rang, deceased at La Rochelle, Sept. 24, 1824, President of the Consistory.

The minutes of the session of the Consistory of May 25, 1825, contain the following mention: "The religious virtues of M. Rang, and his talents as a pastor, have merited for him the esteem of the faithful confided to his direction. For a long time the churches will mourn a pastor so worthy of respect."

84. — December 12, 1818. Louis Fau, born at Roquecourbe (Tarn), deceased at La Rochelle, July 31, 1856, in his sixty-seventh year; President of the Consistory from June 28, 1837, to 1852.

Mr. H. Rioubland devoted a necrological notice to him in the *Echo Rochelais* of August 1, 1856.

Oct. 13, 1822. Consecration of Jean Jay and François-Louis Frossard, suffragan of J. A. Rang.

85. — Feb. 5, 1825. Louis Viguier (appointed in the place of M. Rang, deceased), resigned Feb. 28, 1827, to take charge of the church of Valleraugues. (Gard.)
86. — Sept. 9, 1829. Louis Delmas.[1] Decorated with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor, deputy to the official Synod held at Paris in the month of September, 1848, and President of the Consistory from 1852.

Publications: I. Sermon pour une Reception de Catéchumènes. La Rochelle, 1837.

II. Galerie de quelques Prédicateurs de l'Église Ré-

[1] Also author of this work. — G. L. C.

formée de France. Paris, 1837. — Christ crucifié. Saint-Etienne.

III. Sermons Évangéliques par plusieurs Pasteurs de l'Église Réformée. Marennes, 1839. — Point d'Œuvres pour le Salut, et Point de Salut sans les Œuvres. — Certitude et Insuffisance de l'Immortalité de l'Âme.

IV. Observations en Réponse au Mandement de M. l'Évêque de La Rochelle pour le Carême de 1845, et à l'Ouvrage intitule "Juste Balance." La Rochelle, 1845.

V. Examen de la Réponse de Monsieur l'Évêque de La Rochelle, etc., avec un Appendice sur les Réflexions de Monsieur le Curé de Matha. La Rochelle, 1846.

VI. "Les Sentiers des Siècles Passés," a discourse delivered on the 29th of May, 1859, on the occasion of the secular Jubilee of the Reformed Churches of France. La Rochelle, 1859.

VII. "Les Devoirs du Saint Ministère," a discourse delivered on the occasion of the consecration of M. Henri Meyer. La Rochelle, 1867.

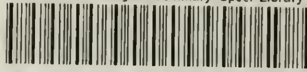
87. — Feb. 17, 1857. Gustave-Frédéric Good, the present pastor (1879), appointed in place of M. Fau, deceased.

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